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VERSICLES,

FROM THE

PORTFOLIO

OF

A SEXAGENARIAN.

Scribere versiculos, miseras et perdere chartas.—MARTIAL.

To write bad versicles and spoil good paper,
I burnt, in by-gone years, the midnight taper;
At sixty, I re-open my Portfolio,
And from its motley store select an *Olio*.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.

LIVERPOOL: ROCKLIFF BROTHERS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOSOLOGY	1
THE MARRIED BARD	30
ADDRESS TO A FALSE TOOTH	41
THE FRIENDS WHOM I HAVE KNOWN	47
THE SONG OF OTHER DAYS	49
REMORSE	51
WRITTEN AFTER SEVERE ILLNESS	57
SONNETS, SUGGESTED BY THE APPREHENDED SCARCITY OF PAPER:—	
ON AN ENVELOPE	61
LOSS AND GAIN	62
SAVING COUNSEL	*ib.*
MATERIALS USED FOR WRITING	63
ON STRAW PAPER	64
A WISH	65

805927

PAGE

A SUGGESTION 66

CONCLUSION . . . . . *ib.*

ELEGY ON A FAVOURITE MARE 68

ALBUM VERSES 72

HOMEWARD, HO! 77

THE BRIDAL AND THE BURIAL 82

TO A. W., IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A PURSE WHICH SHE HAD SENT TO THE AUTHOR 85

ON COMPLETING A TRANSLATION OF YRIARTE'S "FABULAS LITERARIAS" 87

SONNET, FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA . . 94

OH, GIVE ME BACK MY YOUTH 95

A RURAL SEAT—A SONNET 98

AN ORPHAN SCHOOL-GIRL'S LAMENT FOR HER BENEFACTRESS 99

THEY HAD PARTED IN THEIR YOUTH 104

THE RETURN 106

A VALENTINE 110

THE DOMINIE'S COURTSHIP 112

SONNETS ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 115

LLANGOLLEN ALE—WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE KING'S HEAD HOTEL, LLANGOLLEN 117

PAGE

SONNET, WRITTEN AT BIRDLIP 120

IN MEMORIAM 121

TO THE EVENING CLOUDS—A SONNET 127

EPIGRAMS:—

THE LOVE DRAUGHT 128

CRIMINAL AMBITION 129

SUPPLY AND DEMAND . . . . . *ib.*

TO AN OLD COQUETTE . . . . . *ib.*

A WISH ANTICIPATED 130

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST . . . . . *ib.*

COMFORT IN AFFLICTION. 131

TO A VAIN AND VOLUMINOUS AUTHOR . . . *ib.*

NEW BRIGHTON . . . . . *ib.*

WHAT IS A BOOKWORM? 132

AN HOUR IN BYRON'S CHAIR; WRITTEN AT THE VILLA OF S. R—E, ESQ., LEGHORN, IN A CHAIR WHICH HAD BEEN THE PROPERTY OF LORD BYRON . . 133

BY THE SEA-SIDE—A SONNET 140

TO MY SON JOHN; ON HIS SENDING ME, FROM AUSTRALIA, THE PORTRAIT OF MY GRANDCHILD . . . 141

ANCIENT BALLADS: FROM THE SPANISH—

THE YOUNG CID 145

PAGE

ABDALLAH AND HIS CHRISTIAN BRIDE . . . 150

THE KNIGHT OF BUITRAGO 154

THE LADYE OF THE TREE 156

THE MAIDEN TRIBUTE 161

SONNET, WRITTEN ON THE EVENING OF MY WIFE'S FUNERAL 167

SONNET, ON REVISITING THE OLD PRIORY CHAPEL, WOOLTON 169

ERRATA.

Page 7, *line* 27, *for* 'scribanti,' *read* 'scribenti.'

„ 32, „ 1, *for* 'wrapt,' *read* 'rapt.'

„ 109, „ 8, *for* 'In another hemisphere,' *read* 'To another hemisphere.'

PREFACE.

In 1839, Messrs. Blackwood, of Edinburgh, in signifying their acceptance of some poetical translations which he had forwarded to them, requested to be entrusted with the writer's "Portfolio," for the purpose of extracting such of its contents as they might think suitable for insertion in the pages of *Maga*. From some cause or other he neglected to comply with their request; but the remembrance of it lately occurred to him, and suggested the idea of the present volume, which, as the title-page implies, has been selected from a "motley store" of metrical pieces written, with two or three obvious exceptions, many years ago. Of such occasional trifles

it is almost needless to say that they were originally composed without any view to publicity ; and the only excuse which the Author can offer for their publication at the present time is, that the task of revising them for the press has afforded him, during many long evenings, a pleasant occupation, and served, in no small degree, to beguile the loneliness which is too often the lot of an aged valetudinarian. If their perusal should afford half as much pleasure to any of his readers, his expectations will be more than realised.

Liverpool.

VERSICLES.

NOSOLOGY.

I.

Once more I take thee from my desk, once more,
My good old pen, where thou hast lately lain,
Encrusted and corroded to the core
With ink, whose ineradicable stain
Has so begrimed thee that the goose who bore
Would scarcely know thee for her own again.
In sooth, thou art as ugly and as black
As any feather from a raven's back.

II.

But I have loved thee long, and love thee still,
And not a whit the less for thy decay.
I chose thee when thou wert a virgin quill
"In my hot youth;" and, after many a day

Of fond and faithful dalliance, it were ill
To cast thee unconcernedly away,
And now, when thou hast lost thy pristine charms,
To take some younger favourite to my arms.

III.

No! time has but endear'd thee; and I feel
That, dirty as thou art and worn and old,
I still prefer thee to the most genteel
And costly pen that shopman ever sold—
From Perry's pens of fine Albata steel,
To Mordan's diamond-pointed pens of gold,
Which, puff'd and patronised though they may be,
Will never find a purchaser in me.

IV.

And as my friend and townsman Roscoe* wrote
His famous Lives of Leo and Lorenzo,

---

* The statement respecting Roscoe has probably been derived from hearsay, as I am unable to refer to any printed authority for it. Its correctness may therefore be doubtful, and the more so as it is scarcely compatible with the singular elegance, which, even in his old age, distinguished the historian's handwriting

In all their amplitude of text and note,
Six goodly quartos, with a single pen—so
I'll none but thee; and whether I devote
My powers to write an epic *in extenso*,
Or try my talent in some lowlier line
Of song, I'll ask no other aid than thine.

V.

And thou shalt yet indite full many a lay
For me, and for posterity, I trust,
That, when my thread of life is worn away,
I may not go forgotten to the dust;
And if the public, as perhaps they may,
Should place in Westminster thy master's bust,
Why, thou, my good old pen, shalt still appear
In bronze or marble stuck behind mine ear.

VI.

So stir thy ebon stump once more, and write
A poem on the subject of Nosology—

Many authentic instances, however, might be cited from Ackers' *Historia Pennarum* and other sources, of celebrated and voluminous writers who have used the same pen for a long period of years.

Not the Nosology which erudite
Physicians prate of, for the phraseology
Of the profession would bewilder quite
A simple bard like me with its cacology,
And any reference unto Good or Cullen*
Would make the sweetest-temper'd reader sullen.

VII.

I leave such learned subjects unto those
Who, being of the faculty, possess
The faculty to canvass them in prose
Secundum artem. That which I profess
To handle in my verses is the Nose—
A subject which, requiring small address,
Is fitter for a muse like mine to choose
Whose principal design is to amuse.

VIII.

But though I speak thus lightly of my theme,
And mean to treat it in as light a style,

---

* Authors of treatises on Nosology, which, in medical parlance, signifies the arrangement and classification of diseases.

And careless readers may be apt to deem
My matter only worthy of a smile,
I really am more serious than I seem,
And, if not quite in earnest all the while,
I scarcely think my system of Nosology
Less tenable than many another "ology."

IX.

As Pope, who is my favourite bard, maintains
"The proper study of mankind is man"—
A study I had long pursued with pains,
But knew no more than when I first began,
Till, after much perplexity of brains,
I lately hit upon a simple plan,
And found—however strange it seems to say so—
That rightly known, *Vir noscitur à Naso.*

X.

In speculating on the human race
Philosophers have long been used to wrangle,
And of their systems some are common-place,
And others too abstruse to disentangle;

But one of them—which undertakes to trace
The mind's construction in the facial angle—
Is based on truth, and furnishes, indeed,
The hint to which I owe my present creed.

XI.

For if the angle regulates the mind,
The inference is too obvious to dispute,
That as the nose is more or less defined,
And its dimensions mighty or minute,
The mind and angle, which are so combined,
Will each be more obtuse or more acute;
And physiologists may therefore call
The nose "the intellectual all-in-all."

XII.

In fact, if nature merely meant the nose
To be the organ of the sense of smell,
A pair of holes alone, as small as those
Of Jenghiz Khan's chief wife,* would serve to tell

* In Tartary the greatest beauties have the least noses; and, according to Ruybrock, the wife of the celebrated Jenghiz Khan was deemed irresistible, because she had only two holes for a nose.—*New Monthly*, vol. 1. 1821.

How much an onion differs from a rose
In point of odour,* and suffice as well
For conduits of olfactory pain or pleasure
As nostrils of a more expanded measure.†

---

* Wise nature, likewise, they suppose,
Has drawn two conduits down our nose;
Could Alma else with judgment tell,
That cabbage stinks, or roses smell?—*Prior.*

† The nose has furnished a favourite topic of banter to the wits of all ages; and among the many epigrams which are found in the Greek Anthology on the subject, there is one which enumerates several ridiculous uses to which it may be applied. "The nose of Castor is a spade when he digs, a trumpet when he snores, an anchor at sea, a plough in the field," &c. To this epigram Erasmus was probably indebted for the suggestion of the dialogue between Pamphagus and Cocles, which is one of the most amusing of his *Colloquies*. Pamphagus, having been away for many years, wonders how Cocles should recognize him on his return:—"*Co.* Tu miraris si ego te agnovi ex isto tam insigni naso?—*Pa.* Nihil me pœnitet hujus nasi.—*Co.* Nec est cur pœniteat, cum organum tibi sit ad res tam multas utile.—*Pa.* Ad quas?—*Co.* Primum ad extinguendas lucernas erit cornu vice.—*Pa.* Perge.—*Co.* Deinde, si quid hauriendum erit a cavo profundiore, fuerit loco promuscidis.—*Pa.* Papæ!—*Co.* Si manus erunt occupatæ, licebit uti vice paxilli.—*Pa.* Etiamne amplius?—*Co.* Conducet excitando foculo, si defuerit follis.—*Pa.* Belle narras; quid præterea?—*Co.* Si lumen officiat scribanti, præbebit umbraculum.—*Pa.* Ha, he, hi; est præterea quod dicas?—*Co.* In bello navali præbebit usum harpaginis.—*Pa.* Quid in bello terrestri?—*Co.* Erit loco clypei.—*Pa.* Quid deinde?—*Co.* Fin-

XIII.

The nose, believe me, was design'd by fate
For higher purposes than mere sufflation;
And, as the index on a dial-plate,*
Distinctly marks the solar elevation,

---

dendis lignis erit cuneus.—*Pa.* Probe.—*Co.* Si præconem agas, erit tuba; si classicum canas, coma; si fodias, ligo; si metas, falx; si naviges, ancora; in popina fuerit fascina; in piscando hamus.—*Pa.* O me felicem! nesciebam me circumferre tam ad multa conducibilem suppellectilem!" Shakspeare has sported in the like way with the same member; and Falstaff's gibes upon Bardolph's "Malmsly nose" are as extravagant and hyperbolic as those of Cocles. "Thou art our admiral; thou bearest thy lantern not in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee; thou art the knight of the burning lamp."—"I never see thy face but I think on hell-fire, and *Dives* that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning."—"When thou rann'st up *Gad's-hill* in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an *ignis fatuus*, or a ball of wild-fire, there's no purchase in money. O thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light. Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern."—*Henry IV.*

* The same illustration, which I have employed in the present stanza, occurs, but with a more whimsical application, in another of the Greek epigrams:—"By placing your nose and gaping mouth opposite the sun, you will show the hours to those who pass by." This epigram, which is ascribed to the Emperor Trajan, has been admirably imitated by Merivale:—

"Let Dick some summer's day expose
Before the sun his monstrous nose.

The facial angle serves to indicate
Its owner's mental gra-(or degra)-dation,
And clearly shows how fast and far the sun
Of intellect, which ne'er stands still, has run.

XIV.

And thus, more fully to explain my creed,
The idiosyncracy of every man—
The power to undertake and to succeed
In arms or arts—the faculty to plan,
And vigour to achieve a glorious deed,
Depends upon the nose's length or span,
And every mortal actually owes
Whate'er he knows entirely to his nose.

XV.

This theory of mine, which almost might
For its exactitude be term'd a science—

And stretch his giant mouth to cause
Its shade to fall upon his jaws;
With nose so long and mouth so wide,
And those twelve grinders side by side,
Dick, with a very little trial,
Would make an excellent sun-dial."

So simple and so obvious to the sight,
In practice, too, so easy of appliance—
Is one on which, if they reflect aright,
The public ought to place the more reliance,
Because (as may be gathered at a glance) it
Is not from vanity that I advance it.

XVI.

For, looking at my passport or my glass,
Which both agree in their delineation,
So far from fancying that I surpass
My neighbours in my nasal conformation,
I really—though reluctantly, alas!
And with a sense of deep humiliation—
Am forced to own the fact which they disclose
That mine is but an *ordinary* nose.*

---

* On referring to some of my old passports, which I have happened to preserve, I find that, though differing in many minor points as to my personal peculiarities, they invariably attribute to me a *bouche moyenne* and a *nez ordinaire,*

Which means in simple English, I suppose,
A *middling* mouth and *ordinary* nose.

XVII.

And, in a selfish point of view, Phrenology—
The hobby which Gall rides and *Spurs-him* too—
Would doubtless suit me better than Nosology,
Or any other system, old or new;
For, if I have a nose that needs apology,
I have a head that is excell'd by few—
With every known variety of lump,
In Phrenologic language call'd a "bump."

XVIII.

These bumps, they say, contain within their shell
The kernels of each good and bad propensity,
And indicate, whene'er they sink or swell,
Some appetite's inertness or intensity;
They make the hero or the bard excel,
According to their number or immensity,
And slowness of capacity or quickness
Depends upon the cerebella's thickness.

XIX.

Of course, without such bumps a head would be,
However big, no better than a pumpkin,

And for an admirable Crichton we
Should have a despicable Tony Lumpkin.
As *lucus* comes *à non lucendo*, he
Who has no bumps, is therefore call'd a bumpkin;
And skulls that manifest no striking token,
Can only be improved, by being broken.*

XX.

Such is the nonsense which, I blush to say,
Has turn'd the heads of many who defend it,
Because it is the fashion of the day,
And not because they really comprehend it.
But this is a digression, by the way,
And for my own and reader's sake, I'll end it,

---

* I remember one of my schoolfellows, at ——, a youth who had till then been remarkable for stupidity, falling from the window of an upper story into the flagged courtyard below. His head was fearfully bruised, but after a few days' confinement in the infirmary he recovered; and the only consequence of the accident seemed to be that, on his return to his studies, he immediately and apparently without any effort mounted to the top of his class, and retained the position ever afterwards. Perhaps some phrenologist may be tempted, for the advantage of science, to repeat the experiment in his own person.

And, turning from Phrenology, proceed
To illustrate my Nosologic creed.

XXI.

In fact, of all the features that combine
  To give expression to the human face,
I hold the nose to be the outward sign
  Of inward excellence—the crowning grace—
Presiding, like a king, by right divine,
  Supreme above the rest in power and place—
The foremost leader of them all, whom they
Must necessarily follow and obey.

XXII.

It matters little what its shape may be—
  For though some forms are favourite ones, and no man
Would keep a snub or bottle nose, if he
  Could change it for a Grecian or a Roman;
It is not shape but size, it seems to me,
  Or want of size, that makes a quick or slow man,

And he who has a nose of small capacity*
Will have but little genius or sagacity.

XXIII.

Nor is, in truth, the doctrine which I hold
As novel as my readers may suppose,
For it was practised and professed of old.
The ancient Persians, for example, chose
(As Posidonius has expressly told)
Their monarch by his quantity of nose.†

---

* To the question "Quis nasus est optimus?" the author of the *Nugæ Venales* replies:—"Magnus. Vide catalogum Imperatorum Romanorum. Omnes fuerunt nasuti. Numa, secundus rex Romanorum, sesquipedalem nasum habebat; ideoque nominatus fuit Pomphilius, quasi dicas, nasus in superlativo gradu. Lycurgus et Solon habebant insignem nasum, si fides sit adhibenda Plutarcho. Summa, omnes reges Italiæ fuerunt nasuti, excepto Tarquinio Superbo, qui ideò etiam urbe et regno pulsus fuit. Quisque apprehendat nasum suum, et videat num possit fieri imperator. Qui habent magnum nasum, cæteris sapientiores sunt; et melius exercent animi functiones, quia melius excrementa exeunt. Unde Homerus, quia erat sapiens, nasutus dicitur. Et proverbio illi dicuntur prudentes, qui è longinquo odorantur; et de stupido dicitur, non habet nasum."

† Even at the present day the Persians seem to ascribe considerable importance to the feature; for Prince Alexis Soltykoff, in his *Voyage en Perse*, in 1838, relates that the form of salutation universally used by well-bred persons in Persia is *Démàhi schouma tschogh est?* that is to say, "Is your nose very fat?"

Of yore, the Briton, too, was like the Persian,
And held defective noses in aversion.

XXIV.

And one whose writings make me always cry,
In Shakespeare's antiquated phrase, "Aroint"—
She is at once so flippant and so dry—
Miss Catherine Sinclair tells a case in point,
How at Dolwyddelan, in times gone by,
A British prince, whose nose was out of joint,
Was, on the score of that defect alone,
Excluded from succession to the throne.*

---

* The story is thus told in Miss Sinclair's *Hill and Valley*. "We returned in the evening to Capel Curig, a few miles from which stands the ancient tower of Dolwyddelan, within whose walls a Welsh Prince resided for many years, though not allowed to reign, because his nose had been accidentally broken, as in these unsettled times the right of succession could often be unceremoniously thrown aside. It is an ordinary expression, even in the present day, when any one loses an inheritance, that 'his nose has been put out of joint,' and we may very plausibly conjecture that the saying originated at Dolwyddelan Castle."—With all her faults, Miss Sinclair seems to have bestowed much attention on the subject of noses, and to have arrived at very correct notions about them; for in another work, *Scotland and*

XXV.

In Egypt, also, where the priest and mage
Adopted signs and symbols of their own—
The hieroglyphics of a mystic age,
When written characters were yet unknown—
The nose was used to signify a sage,
And when he died was sculptured on the stone
That cover'd his sarcophagus, to show
How wise a mortal lay embalm'd below.

XXVI.

The Romans, too, sagaciously defined
A man who happen'd to be more acute
Than others of the ordinary kind,
By one emphatic word, the word *nasute;**

---

the Scotch, she remarks, when visiting the picture-gallery at Inverary Castle,—"I sometimes wonder what has become of the fine large aquiline noses people used to wear long ago! I never yet saw one on any face that seemed to me too large; but you suppose a carpenter's plane had levelled those of the present day, they are so inferior in altitude to some of the ancient carls here, who look like the lords of a hundred fortresses, frowning upon their vassals with stern authority."

* —— Nasutus nimium cupis videri;
Nasutum volo, nolo polyposum.—*Martial.*
Tu qui nasuté scripta destringis mea.—*Phœdrus.*

And if the modern Roman has declined,
And justly fallen into disrepute,
It is because in figure and dimension
His nose has undergone a like declension.

XXVII.

For now in Italy you no where see
A nose constructed on the good old plan—
Long, large and aquiline—unless it be
San Carlo Borromeo's at Milan,
Where, though he died in fifteen eighty-three,
The body of the venerable man,
Who had as great a nose as e'er was blown,
Is kept in crystal and devoutly shown! *

* For the satisfaction of the matter-of-fact reader, it may be well to state, that,

> Forced by the stern necessity of rhyme
> I've kill'd the saint a year before his time,

and that, fortunately for his flock and for the general interests of religion and humanity, the good pastor's life was prolonged till November, 1584. After his death, his body was embalmed and deposited in a shrine of rock crystal, where, attired in pontifical robes, with the face and hands bare, it may still be seen in tolerable preservation. To the untravelled reader the print from

XXVIII.

And with the ancient Jews such stress was laid
Upon the important organ of emunction,
That Moses, when he gave the law, forbade,
However great might be his ghostly unction,
A Levite, if his nose were scantly made,
To exercise the sacerdotal function.*
But instances of insufficient noses
Were rare among the followers of Moses.

Champigné's portrait, which is prefixed to most of his biographies, will convey a correct notion of San Carlo's singular physiognomy.

* In this respect the Levitical law has, in some degree, been adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, in which any grave personal defect or infirmity is held to be a disqualification in a candidate for holy orders. Sozomen, the church-historian, mentions, that an anchorite, of the name of Ammonius, cut off one of his ears, in order to escape elevation to the episcopacy—a form of the *nolo episcopari* much too effective to find imitators in the present day. With regard to the nose, the rule appears to be less stringent; for, according to Collet, in his *Tractatus de Irregularitatibus*, though the total absence of that very necessary organ is an insurmountable disqualification, yet the importance as impediments of any unsightly deviations from the ordinary nasal formation is left to the decision of the ordaining bishop: "Qui nasum solito grandiorem aut breviorem gerunt, Episcopi arbitrio, atque pro modo deformitatis, irregulares vel non, judicabuntur."

XXX.

And still the Israelite, where'er he goes,
In quest of honest or dishonest gains,
Whether he deals in bullion or "old clo'es,"
In Lombard Street or Monmouth Street, retains
The same distinctive character of nose
As when he wander'd o'er Judea's plains,
And, as in the Mosaic, so in this age
Has every where a most *imposing* visage.

XXXI.

If Negroes are unworthy to compare
With others of their human kith and kin,
As anti-abolitionists declare,
The cause is not the darkness of their skin,
Their elongated heel and woolly hair,
Their curvature and tenderness of shin;
The Negroes are a flat-nosed race, and that's
The reason why they are a race of *flats*.

XXXII.

And hence in China, where the nose is short,
The natives are uncommonly defective

In qualities of the heroic sort—
So timorous, in fact, that I suspect, if
You were to pull it, they would not retort,
Or merely vent their anger in invective;
For, though expert at handicraft or barter,
Whene'er they go to war—they *catch a Tartar*.

XXXIII.

But not to linger further, and retrace
The several types of noses that are known,
To mark and stamp on every separate race
A character exclusively its own,
Imparting that expression to the face
From which its qualities are clearly shown—
My muse shall hasten onwards, and from nations
Proceed to individual illustrations.

XXXIV.

In fact, whoe'er has won a deathless name—
The poet musing by his midnight lamp,
The patriot studious of his country's fame,
The hero in the battle-field or camp,

All, all, with few exceptions, owe the same
To noses of no ordinary stamp;
And if you will not take my word on trust,
Examine them, original or bust.

XXXV.

Review the different poets, who possess
The truest title to the laurel crown,
From Ovid, who derived from his excess
Of nose his *sobriquet* of Naso,* down
To our own Southey who had little less,†
The bards who fill the world with their renown,

---

* Pietro Aretino maintains, in his *Nasea*, that Augustus was jealous of Ovid's "imperial" nose, [probably one of the kind which Lavater says is "worth an empire,"] and therefore banished the bard, with the hope that the biting frosts of Scythia would exterminate the obnoxious member, "Ma per tornare al naso, io voglio dire alla maestà V. un gran segreto, che tutti i Pedanti lo cercano et non l'hanno anchor trovato; che Ovidio Nasone non fu per altro confinato, se non perche Augusto dubita, che quel suo gran naso non li togliesse l'Imperio et mandollo en Esiglio tra quelle nevi et quiei ghiacci della Moscovia, perche li si seccasse il naso di freddo."

† Leigh Hunt, in some doggerel, published in the *Liberal*, under the title of "Southeogony, or the Birth of the Laureat," ascribes to Southey,

The nose of a hawk and the mouth of a gudgeon.

Had noses, like their verses,—quite a treasure—
Remarkable for *quantity* and *measure*.*

XXXVI.

Of orators and statesmen, who have sway'd
By eloquence the senate and the bar,
How great a nose was Pitt's! expressly made
To snuff the coming tempest from afar,
And cock'd as scornfully as if it bade
Defiance to the elemental jar.
'Twere well for Britain, if the sinking state
Had been as ably piloted of late.

XXXVII.

And who of all the sympathising throng
That gaze with eager eyes on Brougham's face,

Byron, too, in the *Vision of Judgment*, is scarcely more complimentary, and thus describes him:—

> The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
> A good deal like a vulture in the face,
> With a hook nose.

* Suckling, in his *Sessions of the Poets*, insists that a nose is absolutely indispensable in a Laureat, and accordingly represents Davenant, who "by a foolish mischance" had lost his, as being rejected on that account by Apollo:—

> In all their records, in verse or in prose,
> There was none of a Laureat who wanted a nose.

And see how rapidly his lithe and long
Proboscis vibrates, when some flagrant case
Of national or individual wrong
Provokes his eloquence, can fail to trace
The old man's oratorical ability
Unto his length of nose and its ductility?

XXXVIII.

And as for heroes—every great commander
Is noted for the greatness of his nose;
From "Macedonia's madman" Alexander,
Till in the present age a chief arose
Whose feats were, like his nasal features, grander
Than any chronicled in verse or prose,
And Europe's balance hung securely on
The hook'd and haughty beak of Wellington.*

* Naso suspendis adunco.—*Horace.*

The *nasus aduncus* has always been considered as the outward sign and symbol of heroism. Henricus Spoor, in his *Deorum et Heroum virorum et mulierum Imagines Antiquæ Illustratæ*, has prefixed to the portrait of Lucius Cæsar a copy of verses commencing with "Debuit hunc Mavors genuisse," and concluding with the following characteristic couplet:—

Lucius aspectu quid spirat? Cæsare dignum;
Signaque maganimi nasus aduncus habet.

XXXIX.

Instead of reading Napier's volumes through,
The soldier or the student who would trace
The genuine history of Waterloo,
May find it written in each leader's face.
Their goal was glory—neck and neck the two
Contending captains held their doubtful race
Through many a heat; and at the crowning close
The English one but won it—by a nose.

XL.

Nor was Napoleon, sooth to say, without
A consciousness of this his chief defect;
For downwards from a marshal to a scout
It ever was his custom to select
His agents by their longitude of snout,
Averring that he found in this respect,
A fact which all experience will accredit,
The longest-nosed to be the longest-headed.*

* Napoleon used to say, "Strange as it may appear, when I want any good head-work done, I choose a man, provided his education has been suitable, with a long nose. His breathing is

XL.

And hence the present bearer of his name
Was born beneath a luckier star; for in
Ambition's dark and complicated game,
However cautiously he might begin
And craftily conceal his real aim,
A player so *nasute* was sure to win,
And must have felt, whene'er he felt his nose,*
That he could be an Emperor, if he chose.

XLI.

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the childish dread
With which, long years ago, in Greystock Hall,†
I stood before the portraits of the dead
That hung upon its oak-impanell'd wall!

---

bold and free, and his brain, as well as his lungs and heart, cool and clear. In my observation of men, I have almost invariably found a long nose and a long head go together."

* "Quisque apprehendat nasum suum, et videat num possit fieri Imperator." See extract from *Nugæ Venales* in a previous note, p. 14.

† An old seat of the Norfolk family, situate a few miles from Penrith. The entrance-hall contains (or did contain some forty

But there was one, a stern and sombre head,
That rivetted my vision most of all,
And in the deepening twilight made me draw
My breath with an uneasy sense of awe.

XLII.

And yet that face was but a homely one,
Or would have seem'd so to a transient gaze,
Excepting for the ruby nose, which shone,
As shines some lofty beacon, with a blaze
So unexpected that the looker-on
Is struck with perturbation and amaze,
And sees the fiery portent with a fear
That an invading foe is in the rear.

XLIII.

The face—or I should say the nose, for this
Impress'd its character upon the face—
Was Cromwell's—painted by a hand that is
More famous for its truthfulness than grace,

---

years ago) many fine original portraits, and among them a very striking one of the Protector.

Presenting Oliver's peculiar phiz,

With every wart and pimple in its place,*

Like mole-hills round the base of that huge nose

Which was the dread and bye-word of his foes! †

---

* Cromwell was, like Queen Elizabeth, particular about his portraits; but, unlike her, he preferred fidelity to flattery, and is said to have instructed his favourite painter Walker not to inflict any "nonsense" on the canvas, but to paint wrinkles, warts and all.

† "The 'ruby nose' of the Protector was productive at the time of much doggerel nonsense and low buffoonery. The 'blazing of his beacon nose'—the 'glow-worm glistening on his beak'—and similar instances of abuse occur frequently in the pages of the opposite party. This prominent feature was even made to personify the Protector himself, and we find persons, instead of asking how Cromwell was, inquiring after his nose. 'Thanks to Cromwell's nose,' was a frequent expression; and again, 'the ruby nose drew his dagger in the house.'—'Thanks to the devil first, and next to Nol Cromwell's nose;' and 'Nose Almighty made answer,' &c.—Even such person as the Marquis of Montrose could condescend to this indifferent wit. Soon after the execution of Charles we find Montrose asking a new comer to the Hague, 'How Oliver's nose did?' But there is more humour in a similar taunt of Walker, in his History of Independency:—'Oliver,' he says, 'is a bird of prey, as you may know by his bloody beak.'" *Jesse's Court of England during the Reign of the Stuarts.*—A scurrilous broadside, printed in 1648, entitled "The Cuckoo's Nest at Westminster," contains a dialogue between the Protectress and Lady Fairfax, in which the merits and pretensions of their husbands, and their own chances of attaining to "queenly" rank, are discussed. Mrs. Cromwell angrily remarks: "And is not Noll Cromwell's wife as likely a woman to be Queen of England as you? Yes, I warrant you is she.

XLIV.

And one who was, like Cromwell, brave and wise,
  And rose, like him, to more than regal sway,
Count Rudolph had a nose of such a size
  That when he walk'd abroad, it stopp'd the way—*
And hence his proud descendants, I surmise,
  Are so obstructive at the present day.
No less a nose had William of Nassau,
A better soldier than a son-in-law.

Your husband is counted a fool, and wants wit to reign; every boy scoffs at him. My Noll has a head-piece, a face of brass, full of majesty, and a nose will light a whole kingdom to walk after him. I say he will grace a crown, being naturally adorned with diamonds and rubies already."—A long note, in Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. 1, p. 42, supplies further particulars respecting the many libels and pasquinades with which the Protector's nose was assailed by the royalist party.

* The nose of Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg, afterwards Emperor of the Romans, and the founder of the noble House of Austria, was, says Dr. Doran, "of a size to make Slawkenburgius swear with admiration. He was once with his courtiers in a very narrow defile, when they encountered a peasant. 'Pass on, pass on,' cried the officers; 'the Emperor, the Emperor.'—'That's all very well,' said the clown, 'but where can I go? His nose fills up the whole valley.' The courtiers conjectured that the Imperial wrath would be excited; but Rudolph, turning his head on one side, exclaimed laughingly, 'Now friend, get on with thee; my poor nose is no longer in the way.'"—*Dr. Doran's Court Fools.*

XLV.

But here—although some scores of names remain
With which I meant to illustrate my song,
Yet feeling conscious that to stretch the strain
Beyond its present limits would be wrong,
And tempt the gentlest reader to complain
That I had led him by the nose too long,—
I'll end abruptly this *Extravaganza*,
And not inflict on him another stanza.

THE MARRIED BARD.

I.

There was a time when my poetic powers,
So cold and feeble now, were warm and strong,
When, like a bee that feeds on summer flowers
And pays their sweetness with as sweet a song,
A tuneful vagrant in the Muses' bowers
I wander'd fancy-free the whole day long,
And cull'd from every thing that met my view
A feeling and a theme for ever new.

II.

For whether with a book at break of day
I stroll'd along the "wizard" banks of Dee,
Or in the hot noon indolently lay
Beneath the umbrage of a forest tree,

Or paused at eve upon my homeward way
To watch the red sun sink into the sea—
All sights in youth's impressionable season
Inspired my mind with rhyme, if not with reason.

III.

Had I fulfill'd the promise of my prime,
I might have grown up very wise and witty,
Acquired a greater readiness of rhyme,
And written, ere I died, some famous ditty;
But manhood came, and in the course of time,
As men are apt to do, the more the pity,
I took a wife, and found her a reality
That quickly banish'd all my ideality.

IV.

And yet I took her with the best intention;
For on my first acquaintance with her, she
Inspired my fancy, quicken'd my invention,
And "woke the god within" to that degree,
That scarcely any bard whom you could mention
Was comparable for the nonce with me—

My wrapt eyes rolling in the finest frenzy,
And seeing more than ordinary men see.

V.

A change was wrought within me and around me,
The common earth on which I trod became
More redolent of flowers, the sky which crown'd me
Was gemm'd with stars that shot a brighter flame,
And, loosen'd from the fleshy ties that bound me,
My very soul appear'd no more the same,
But suddenly sublimed into an essence
Of poetry and passion by her presence.

VI.

And she so doted (or appear'd to dote)
On verse, (especially on mine, which she
Took every opportunity to quote,)
And said so oft, (and smiled the while on me,)
"If poets felt as warmly as they wrote,
How truly bless'd a poet's wife must be!"
That conscious of the hint, and acting on it,
I popp'd the question to her in a sonnet.

VII.

It was not cold, conceited and pedantic,
Like ordinary sonnets; but a lay
In which the love that almost made me frantic,
Was utter'd in a more impressive way,
In language sweet, impassion'd and romantic,
To which no maiden heart could answer "nay."
Had Petrarch written his on such a principle,
Not even Laura would have proved invincible.

VIII.

In short, I did not sue in vain; and led
By fantasy and feeling madly on,
I married, doubting not that I should wed
The Graces and the Muses all in one.
But now my dream of poesy has fled,
The spell is broken, the illusion gone;
For the economy of household matters
Will wear and tear a poet's soul to tatters.

IX.

No more, no more, the mountain and the vale
Supply their sweet emotions at my will;

To me the herds that browze along the dale
Are each a spectre of my butcher's bill;
I see the ripe corn waving in the gale,
And think of "bairns" that hunger for their fill;
And the blue river, boiling on its way,
Reminds me of the weekly washing-day.

X.

No more I hear the sounds I loved to hear,
The merry music of the birds and streams,
But cook and housemaid now appal mine ear,
And scatter with their clatter all my dreams;
My very children, too, like those of Lear,
Have "power to shake my manhood"—with their screams,
And, though they look like cherubs in their bloom,
Are very demons in a poet's room.

XI.

They make my study, much against my will,
The constant theatre of all their plays,

And tease me—for the imps are never still—
With what their mother calls their "winning ways."
Euphemia twists an ode into a spill,
And Alaric spills the inkstand on my baize;
Alas! where wife and children are, I ween
A poet's *bays* will never long be green.

XII.

And she, the object of my youthful flame,
And subject of my song, my Leonore,
Is now a stout and somewhat serious dame,
Who thinks the best of poetry a bore;
And though, as I am sure, in heart the same,
And loving me no less than heretofore,
Has lost the grace and symmetry of person
Which formerly I wrote so many a verse on.

XIII.

The taper waist on which I loved to gaze,
Has run to waste, and is no longer slim;
The eyes that once subdued me by their blaze,
Are now themselves subdued by age and dim.

Is this the Leonore of other days,
The goddess who inspired my sweetest hymn,
Who darns my stockings now, and is my wife?
I cannot sonnetize her for my life.

XIV.

And now, whene'er I take up pen to write,
Half images of thought come flitting round,
That, like the dusk wings of the bat at night,
Have hardly power to rise above the ground;
And, eager to be put in black and white,
Rude rhymes assail me with a mighty sound
Prelusive of Apollo—as the humming
Within a sea-shell shews the great tide's coming.

XV.

But just when the poetic fervour's up,
Like bottled beer, and ready to run o'er,
Some demon dashes from my lips the cup,
And leaves my soul as empty as before;
My fancy flags, and, like a new-born pup,
Lies blind and grovelling; and my splendid store

Of phrase and rhyme flies from me, and I find
A dark and dreary void within my mind.

XVI.

And yet, oh! matrimony, though I cast
The blame of this poetic dearth on thee,
I will not say my Muse hath died aghast
Beneath the poison of thy upas-tree,
But rather pleasantly breathed out her last,
Smother'd in honey like a greedy bee;
For thou hast brought me many a sterling comfort,
And shall I grudge to pay a paltry sum for 't?

XVII.

"Hail, wedded love!" as Milton truly sings,*
(And having married thrice, he ought to know
The bliss or bale that matrimony brings,)
"Hail, wedded love!" how much to thee I owe!
The fountain from whose pure exhaustless springs
Domestic sweets perpetually flow,

---

* Hail, wedded love—
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets.—*Paradise Lost.*

Though with the sweets, — and doubtless for our
crimes,—
*Surgit amari aliquid** sometimes.

XVIII.

Man takes a wife "for better or for worse,"
Unwitting what the consequence may be,
Perhaps a blessing or perhaps a curse;
But mine has been a blessing unto me—
A friend, adviser, comforter and nurse,
In joy or sorrow, health or sickness, she
Has ever shown a fondness and devotion
Of which a bachelor has little notion.

XIX.

And therefore grateful, for so great a bliss—
That in the lottery of connubial life
The best of prizes, which so many miss,
Has fallen to my share, a worthy wife—

---

* Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.—*Horace.*

I promised her this morning with a kiss,
That, to remove all future risk of strife,
I'd fling my Rhyming Lexicon away,*
And write no further verses from to-day.

XX.

My cherished studies! I renounce them all;
And in their place my daily tasks shall be,
To rock the cradle if the baby squall,
To teach my youngest boy his A. B. C,
To wind the "gudewife's" yarn into a ball,
Or play at cribbage with her after tea,
To rise at six and go to bed at ten,
The very model of domestic men.

XXI.

But if no more, a votary of the Nine,
I court the critic's praise or fear his blame,
Nor hope to leave some written line of mine
Which may entitle me to deathless fame,

* Walker's Dictionary of Rhymes.

Non omnis moriar—I shall leave a line
Of sons who will perpetuate my name,
And bear it further down the stream of time,
Than it could ever have been borne by rhyme.

ADDRESS TO A FALSE TOOTH.

They err who call thee *false*. Thou art, dear tooth,
The very type of constancy and truth;
For I have had thee long, and, since the day
When first the dentist fix'd thee in my jaw,
Have found thee still impervious to decay,
As perfect as a pearl without a flaw,
And so exempt from every ache and pain
From which my other teeth are seldom free,
That I should reckon it no trifling gain
Could I exchange the few that yet remain
For sound and serviceable ones like thee.

Who was thy former owner, canst thou say?
And is he still alive, or is he dead?
Some clown, who lost thee in a village fray,
Extracted by a cudgel from his head?

Some famish'd wretch, ashamed to beg or steal,
Who sold thee to obtain a scanty meal ?*
Or some young tandem-driving fop mayhap,
Who parted with thee in a foolish prank,
That he might spit more freely through the gap,
And hit a horse-fly on his leader's flank.†

Didst thou belong unto a bard, whose dental
Appendages were chiefly ornamental,
Because he lived on air—though, now and then,
They served to nibble at a nail or pen ?
Or didst thou dwell within a Templar's jaw,
And help to eat his way unto the bar ?

---

* Miss Hawkins, in her "Memoirs," relates that, in early life, Emma Hart, afterwards the notorious Lady Hamilton, being out of place, and in a state of almost utter starvation, was on her way to a dentist with the intention of raising a small sum by the sale of her fine set of teeth, when she encountered an old fellow-servant, who persuaded her to resort to a less creditable method of relieving her necessities.

† The fashion of having a front tooth extracted or perforated, in order to enable them to spit with greater facility and precision, prevailed among the members of our four-in-hand clubs, about the beginning of the present century.

Or etymologist's, who cramm'd his maw
With Greek and Hebrew roots, like Dr. Parr ?*
Or hero's, one who plied the trade of blood,
And lost his life to gain a livelihood ?
And art thou, after having bit the dust
At Waterloo, returned to bite a crust ?†

Or wert thou—but I question thee in vain,
Thou canst not give me any satisfaction ;
Nor would it profit me to ascertain
(If I could ascertain it) thy *extraction.*

---

* According to the *Menagiana,* the pronunciation of the Hebrew language is so difficult that St. Jerome, who mentions the circumstance in one of his Epistles, submitted to have his teeth filed, by way of qualifying himself to pronounce it properly.

† During the Peninsular war the continent was the great source from which the dentists of the metropolis derived their supply of teeth for the wealthier classes. A chapter on "Resurrectionists," in the *Life of Sir Astley Cooper,* furnishes some curious particulars of the mode in which teeth were procured through the instrumentality of parties who, following in the track of the belligerent forces, generally obtained them on the night succeeding a battle. "Oh, Sir," said one of these wretches to Mr. Bransby Cooper, "only let there be a battle, and there will be no want of teeth. I'll draw them as fast as the men are knocked down."

I purchased thee for use, and not for show;
And, so thou suitest me, it is a thing
Of little consequence how long ago
Thou wert the grinder of a clown or king,
Or through how many mouths thou may'st have pass'd
Till luckily transferr'd to mine at last.*
I have thee—thou art mine—if not for ever,
Affianced unto me at least for life,
United by a tie which none shall sever,
Bone of my bone, as truly as my wife;
And even should thy former owner—he
Who first possess'd thee, whosoe'er he be—
Endeavour to dissolve our new alliance,
Nay, though his very ghost or fetch should come
At dead of night to fetch thee from my gum—
I'll keep thee fast and set him at defiance.

---

* "Lord Lansdowne, at breakfast, mentioned of *Dutens*, who wrote the *Memoires d'un Voyageur qui se Repose*, and was a great antiquarian, that on his describing once his good luck in having found (what he fancied to be) a tooth of Scipio's, in Italy, some one asked him what he had done with it, upon which he answered briskly, 'What have I done with it? *le voiçi*,' pointing to his mouth, where he had made it supplemental to a lost one of his own."—*Moore's Diary.*

In fact, my honest friend, I'll never *cut* thee,
But have and hold thee where the dentist put thee;
For thou art just as fit for every duty
Of mastication, utterance and beauty—
Art just as indispensable a tooth,
In all respects, as if thou ne'er hadst known
A pre-existent state, but wert, in sooth,
A native sprout and product of my own—
Bred in my mouth, coeval with the set
That ate my bread from infancy.

And yet
A day, alas! will come when we must part,
My trusty tooth; for on that awful day
When, summon'd from their graves, the dead shall start
And re-inform their former forms of clay—
When countless spirits, scrambling for their own,
And quarrelling, like dogs, about a bone,
From every quarter, east, west, north and south,
Shall rake their scatter'd quarters limb by limb,
Some skeleton may see thee in my mouth,
And, knowing that thou hadst belong'd to him,

May claim thee, ere he takes his last descent,
And make, in fact, as great a rout about thee,
As if, poor wretch, he could not be content
To go and gnash his other teeth without thee.

THE FRIENDS WHOM I HAVE KNOWN.

I.

When fortune smiled, and wealth was mine,
The troops that fill'd my hall,
And pledged their friendship in my wine,
I scarce could count them all;
And I, their silly dupe and prey,
Believed their hearts my own,
But fortune frown'd—and where are they,
The friends whom I have known?

II.

Gone, gone to court the rich and proud,
They scorn to know me now;
Or, if they greet me in the crowd,
'Tis with a silent bow.
I see the smiling face no more,
Or hear the kindly tone,

With which they welcomed me of yore,
The friends whom I have known.

III.

Then fly my bark, and bear me on,
From shores I loathe to see,
Unto some savage isle, where none
May fawn or frown on me—
Some far-off wilderness, where I
May live and die alone,
Forgetting and forgotten by
The friends whom I have known.

THE SONG OF OTHER DAYS.

I.

Oh! sing it not—that simple air
Though sung by one so young and fair,
Awakes no feeling save despair.

Oimé!

II.

For every note recalls the time
When first I listen'd to its chime,
And life and love were in their prime.

Oimé!

III.

I heard it on my bridal day,
And felt the happier for a lay
At once so tender and so gay.

Oimé!

IV.

But death has taken from my side
The fondly loved and loving bride,
Who sang it in that hour of pride!
Oimé!

V.

And now the sweetest songs appear
Unto my disenchanted ear
A discord which I loathe to hear.
Oimé!

VI.

And even in this simple air,
Though sung by one so young and fair,
There breathes no feeling save despair!
Oimé!

REMORSE.

I.

Could I recall life's wasted years,
Would Heaven a further term allow,
I'd spend it in repentant tears,
Nor be the wretch that I am now;
I'd bend my knee in prayer, I'd bow
In humbleness before my God,
And bind myself by any vow
To follow where my Saviour trod.

II.

My Saviour! how can lips like mine
Profane a name so pure as His?
Alas! not even power divine,
Can save me from the dread abyss.

I sold my heritage of bliss,
Like Esau, for a sensual swill,
And suffer in a death like this
The proper penalty of ill.

III.

My friends, my mistress, where are they?
The loved, the trusted, all have fled,
And none but heartless hirelings stay
Reluctantly beside my bed.
The creatures whom my bounty fed
Forsake me in my hour of pain,
As I abandon'd Him who bled
And perish'd for my sake in vain.

IV.

I squander'd all my youth in crime,
And dream'd not through each pleasant year
Of death, though at some far-off time
I knew the spectre must appear;
But now, when he is hovering near,
I shrink with terror and surprise

From one whom even saints might fear,
And none but madmen would despise.

V.

For now between each gasp of breath
Which shakes me and may be my last,
As on the haggard face of death
I gaze bewilder'd and aghast,
The creed to which I clung so fast,
That I should wholly cease to be,
Is gone, and I am overcast
By clouds through which I cannot see.

VI.

But though the untried future seems
A dark impenetrable void,
The past is reproduced, and teems
With memories not to be destroy'd;
Each gift that I have misemploy'd,
My mind, my body, and my time,
Whatever I have most enjoy'd
Appals me as a deadly crime.

VII.

I know that it would heal my woe,
But still I cannot frame a prayer,
My senses are distracted so
By fiends who mock me in the air;
I see, I hear them everywhere,
Above, beneath me, all around,
Their eyeballs have a ghastly glare,
Their laughter is a fearful sound.

VIII.

In vain I strive—they will not flee—
To chase away each fiendish foe;
I shut my eyes, but still I see
The gulf that gapes for me below.
My room is reeling to and fro,
The rafters starting from the wall—
I clutch around me as I go,
But meet with nought to stay my fall.

IX.

Down, down I sink! Oh! would that I
Had never seen the light of day!

Predestined from my birth to die,
Created to be cast away—
But no! e'en now I see a ray,
As if from heaven, disperse the gloom,
And hear a voice which seems to say,
"Repentance may avert thy doom!"

X.

I feel that voice, though small and still,
Into my inmost soul descend;
It urges me to turn from ill,
And, ere it be too late, amend,
Nor further by despair offend
Against the clemency of God,
Who made me for a happier end,
And but in mercy plies the rod.

XI.

It bids me pray to Him for grace
That He would help my unbelief,
And though with me life ebbs apace,
And time for penitence is brief,

The cry of my remorse and grief
May even yet be heard, and He
Who pardon'd the expiring thief
May open Paradise to me.

XII.

I know the greatness of my guilt,
But He would rather save than slay;
One drop of blood on Calvary spilt
Can wash the foulest stains away.
O Son of God, to thee I pray
For mercy with my latest breath,
Relieve my anguish and dismay,
And bless me in the hour of death.

WRITTEN AFTER SEVERE ILLNESS.

I.

The hills that dimly stretch afar,
The vales that undulate between,
The streams that sparkle on their way,
And give the sward a brighter green,
The song of birds, the thin grey smoke
That curls from many a cottage fire,
The bells that with a Sabbath chime
Are pealing from the village spire.

II.

To me these common sights and sounds
Impart no common bliss to-day,
When newly risen from the couch
Where many a weary week I lay,

I breathe once more the balmy air,
And lingering on this sunny slope,
Survey the varied scene, and grow
Reanimate with health and hope.

III.

And, as my languid frame revives,
I feel a soothing sense arise
Of thankfulness within my heart,
And overflow into mine eyes—
A sense of thankfulness to Him
Whose hand beneficently dress'd
The earth in loveliness and light
That man, the earth-worm, might be bless'd.

IV.

The Omnipresent!—If I e'er
Forget him in the crowd, yet how
Intensely I am forced to feel
The glory of the Godhead now!
For here, as if his chosen home
Were in this calm sequester'd place,

The deaf, methinks, might hear his voice,
The blind might see him face to face.*

v.

The grandeur of the mighty hills,
The beauty of the smallest flower,
Each object in the fair expanse
Proclaims His goodness and his power;
And, fill'd with ecstacy, I bow
My knee, and thank him, as I kneel,
For all the blessings that he gives,
For all the transports that I feel.

vi.

Another look, and I depart—
But memory still, where'er I stray,
Shall oft recall with fond regret
The scene and feelings of to-day;

---

* My lips that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness.
WORDSWORTH.

And heaven-ward-borne, like yonder lark
That soars exulting from the sod,
My soul, sublimed anew, shall rise
"From Nature up to Nature's God."

SONNETS,

SUGGESTED BY THE APPREHENDED SCARCITY OF PAPER.

I.

ON AN ENVELOPE.

If paper, as they say, is getting dear,
And likely to be dearer every day,
A poet must henceforward, it is clear,
Economize his foolscap and his lay;
And therefore, as a member of the tribe,
I'll take a hint from "paper-sparing" Pope,
Who wrote on backs of letters, and inscribe
My daily verses on an envelope.
So, on the cover that enclosed, dear Anne,
Thy kind and welcome note within its folds,
I scrawl for thee, as closely as I can,
This simple sonnet which it scantly holds;
For even fourteen lines are hard to cram
Into so small a parallelogram.

II.

LOSS AND GAIN.

A dearth of paper, if it but produce,
As it is like to do, a dearth of song,
Will luckily diminish an abuse
Which hapless readers have endured too long;
For every scribbler has the itch of rhyme,
And numbers pour their numbers through the press,
With such a waste of paper, ink and time,
As hitherto has seemed beyond redress.
But when these manufacturers of verse,
Who thus assail the public ear, become,
The good (if there be any such) more terse,
And all the others altogether dumb,
Though pastry-cooks and grocers may complain,
The private loss will be a public gain.

III.

SAVING COUNSEL.

How much of paper might be saved and cash,
If poets were content to bide their time!
But with a fatal fluency of rhyme,
And confidence that nothing can abash,

They print without remorse such maudlin trash,
Believing it to be the true sublime,
That honest critics, to avenge the crime,
Are forced reluctantly to ply the lash.
'Twere well—should paper still advance in price—
If poets, from the laureate down to me,
Whene'er they perpetrate a piece, could be
Constrain'd to follow Horace's advice, *
And, ere the manuscript in print appears,
Be *bound to keep the peace* at least nine years.

IV.

MATERIALS USED FOR WRITING.

What different substances have been employ'd
In writing! from the granite rocks of yore,
By Seth's descendants rudely graven o'er
With characters that are not yet destroy'd,

---

* The Horatian precept "Nonum prematur in annum" is thus paraphrased by Pope:—

"I drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel: 'Keep your piece nine years.'"

To bricks of clay and plates of brass or lead,
The skins of animals and bark of trees,
Till paper, perfected by slow degrees,
Supplied a cheap material in their stead.
But now, when linen rags no more abound,
And every miss and master must peruse
Their weekly novel and their daily news,
Some substitute for paper should be found
To satisfy the popular demand,
And with fresh books and journals glut the land.

V.

ON STRAW PAPER.

This sheet, which lies before me, made from straw,
Is certainly, despite the maker's brags,
The poorest paper that I ever saw,
And viler than the vilest made from rags—
So coarse that often it arrests the pen,
And yet so frail that every now and then
The nib goes through it at the slightest stroke.
Such paper, twisted with sufficient skill,
Might make a cigarito or a spill,
And fittingly evaporate in smoke;

But as a caligraphic medium—pshaw!
Though costing very little, I confess,
It would be dear if costing even less,
And, rightly valued, is not worth a straw.

VI.

A WISH.

Remembering how the monkish copyists, when
Their store of parchment was exhausted, took
Some long-neglected volume from its nook,
Erased the text with pumice-stone, and then
Within the newly expurgated book
Inscribed new matter worthier of their pen—
I would that art could cleanse the inky page
Of works unsuited to the present age,
Restore the paper to its pristine tint,
And make them fit to re-appear in print.
The butterfly was once a grub; and so
The ponderous quarto of some dull divine
Might thus become a duodecimo
Of light and lively versicles like mine.

VII.

A SUGGESTION.

In manuscripts and books of early date
Abbreviations were employ'd, and thus
A volume, render'd less voluminous,
Was manufactured at a cheaper rate.
So now, when readers multiply apace,
And paper daily grows more scarce and dear,
Stenography, or short-hand, it is clear,
Should be adopted by the scribbling race.
For even though an author still might be
As prosy and prolix as formerly,
Yet, if the same amount of common-place
Which issues daily from the pen or press,
Were thus condensed into a smaller space,
The cost and waste of paper would be less.

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

A sonnet is not long, and yet ere now
Some sonnetteers have tediously penn'd
(As even Petrarch's readers must allow)
So many that they seem to have no end;

And though an Epigram is shorter still,
Yet Martial's fourteen books too well attest
That sometimes epigrammatists of skill
Exceed the limits of becoming jest.
In fact, as honey, if we eat too much,
Becomes more nauseous than the bitterest gall,
The sweetest strains—and mine are surely such—
May be reiterated till they pall:
So ere my song and subject prove a bore,
I'll drop the pen, and sonnetize no more.

ELEGY ON A FAVOURITE MARE.

"SAD WAS THE PARTING, OH! NE'ER TO MEET MAIR."
Burns.

I.

All flesh of every living thing is grass,
And quadrupeds, like bipeds, fade and fall;
For death cuts down with equal scythe, alas!
The pony and the prebend in the *stall.*

II.

He spareth none; the lofty and the low,
The mansion-house and stable both declare
That life's unstable, and their records show
How glanders or green-fat may choke a *may'r.*

III.

Thy race is run, my peerless Jessie—thou
Hast kick'd the bucket, and resign'd thy breath;

I look around, and every object now
Presents some *grave* memento of thy death.

IV.

The dusty saddle tells from yonder nook
That thou art dust—a *sad ill* unto me;
The very *bridle* hath a *funeral* look;
The stirrup—would that I could stir up thee!

V.

Oh! could the tears which now I shed in vain,
Or could my prayers avail to bring thee back,
I'd never take offence* with thee again,
In fact, I'd never take thee from the *rack*.

VI.

No longer would I treat thee like a brute,
Or wound thee with the whip, or prick thee on
With those "appliances and means to *boot*"
Yclept a pair of spurs;—but thou art gone,

---

* Query, *a fence?*

VII.

Gone to the *dogs*. No more the huntsman's horn
Shall wake thee to the chase of fox or hare;
To-night the hounds, that miss'd thee in the morn,
Shall find thee at the knacker's yard, my mare.

VIII.

No more my boys shall run with buoyant glee,
To tell that John has brought thee to my door:
The groom, who got his bread by feeding thee,
Shall put a *bit* into thy mouth no more.

IX.

I loved thee well, and still shall hold thee dear;
The farrier's bill which I have yet to pay,
The stable which I rented by the year,
Will make thee *dear* to me for many a day.

X.

Though apt to kick a dust up, thou wert mild
In temper, and averse to needless strife—
At *crib*, as quiet as a cradled child,
And, under curb, submissive as a wife.

XI.

But why should I prolong the tedious strain?
Oppress'd with woe and hopeless of relief,
My verse in this reverse is pour'd in vain,
Nor can a lay like mine allay my grief.

XII.

In vain I sing—for now that thou art gone,
Who wert my Pegasus, the Nine refuse
To strain a point to point the strain of one
Who has no further business with the *Mews*.

ALBUM VERSES.

I.

Fanny, as I bent my brow
O'er thine Album yesternight,
Musing on the page where thou
Hadst requested me to write—

II.

On a sudden I was struck
By a whisper, sharp and clear,
From the pen which I had stuck
Pensively behind mine ear.

III.

"Ere thou dippest me in ink,"
Said the warning voice to me,
"Pause, presumptuous bard, and think
What the consequence may be.

IV.

"If thou hast some little fame
Which thou carest to retain,
If thou wouldst not come to shame,
And be thought a dolt, refrain.

V.

"For within this Album, see,
Many a scribe, of greater skill
Than was e'er ascribed to thee,
Has already plied the quill.

VI.

"Turn its tinted pages—look
At their contents, and thou'lt find
Thickly strewn throughout the book
Verses of the rarest kind.

VII.

"'Sonnet to the setting Sun;'
'Ditto to the rising Moon;'
'Trip to Scotland, with a *run*
On the *banks* of bonnie Doon;'

VIII.

"'Wailings of a turtle-dove
Lately parted from her mate;'
'Meditations on a glove
Stolen from my cousin Kate;'

IX.

"'Stars are falling fast—a *Catch;*'
'Life is full of care—a *Glee;*'
'Leave the door upon the latch,
Lizzie, and I'll come to thee;'

X.

"'Woman's Constancy—a Tale;'
'Cœlebs on connubial strife;'
'Monody composed at Hale,
When I lost my second wife;'

XI.

"'Maiden musings on a kiss;'
'Courtship in the days of yore;'
'He had married once *a-miss*,
And would never marry more;'

XII.

"'What is friendship but a name?'
'*Dog*grel Epitaph on Tray;'
'Stanzas to the pretty dame
'At the draper's o'er the way;'

XIII.

"Byron's song, 'The *Oils* of *Grease*,
Newly *render'd* by A. Cook;'
'Ode to Peace'—the sweetest piece,
By the bye, within the book.

XIV.

"Here, in short, is many a lay,
Which in its peculiar line,
Sentimental, grave, or gay,
Far exceeds the best of thine.

XV.

"Fling me, then, at once away,
Shut the volume and depart;
Nor, by scribbling here, betray
What a wretched bard thou art."

XVI.

Though the counsel gall'd my pride,
I obey'd the warning sprite,
Threw the pen and book aside,
And for once forebore to write.

HOMEWARD, HO!

I.

The bark, beneath a press of sail,
Flies fast through Biscay's Bay,
And, like a bird before the gale,
Pursues her homeward way,
As steadfastly as if the force
Of instinct sped her on her course.

II.

But faster far across the main
My restless wishes fly,
To reach the land, and meet again
My Julia, ere I die;
Again to gaze upon her face,
If only for one moment's space.

III.

For now, though hardly past my prime,
Yet wasted, weak and wan,
I come from Afric's sickly clime
A doom'd, a dying man,
Whom nought, not even love, can save,
Dear Julia, from an early grave.

IV.

The hectic cheek, the sunken chest,
A heart that feebly throbs,
And breathings painfully express'd
In short convulsive sobs,
And failing strength and spirits tell
The progress of decay too well.

V.

But still, though youth and health are gone,
And I am sadly changed,
I have no fear, my cherish'd one,
To find thy heart estranged ;
I ask my own, and it replies
That true affection never dies.

VI.

The sight may shock thee—but each tear
Which thou wilt shed to see
My alter'd form, will but endear
That form the more to thee,
And make thee love me even more
Devotedly than heretofore.

VII.

How often, and in vain, have I
Explored with wistful glance
The far horizon, to descry
The pleasant shores of France,
And sunk despairing on the deck,
Unable to discern a speck !

VIII.

And when there came a calm one day,
Without a breath of air,
And like a log the vessel lay,
I thought, in my despair,
That I would plunge into the sea
And drown at once my misery.

IX.

But, with an effort to suppress
The suicidal thought,
I turn'd to Heaven in my distress
And earnestly besought
That He whose arm is "strong to save"
Would bear me scatheless o'er the wave.

X.

And Heaven at length has heard my vow;
For on the ocean's rim
A ridge of land is rising now,
Though far away and dim;
And nearer still, the eye may scan
The shifting lights of Corduan.*

XI.

And ere another day has gone,
The bark, with favouring gales,

---

* A light-house, built on a rock, off the mouth of the Gironde.

Will anchor in the broad Garonne,
And furl her weary sails,
And I shall live to clasp once more
My Julia, on my native shore.

THE BRIDAL AND THE BURIAL.

I.

Hark! the church-bells to the weal
  Of a newly-married pair,
With the long and lively peal
  Of their music fill the air;
But, fair as is the bride,
  There is sadness in her face,
And the bridegroom at her side
  Stoops and falters in his pace.

II.

'Twas a year ago last May—
  When a single fortnight more
Would have brought their wedding-day—
  That he left his native shore;

Left his lady-love to weep
In solitary woe,
And across the distant deep
Went to fight his country's foe.

III.

Many a weary month had gone,
And her hopes were failing fast,
When the long-expected one
To his home return'd at last,
But so weak and worn and maim'd,
That the maiden with a sigh,
As she look'd on him, exclaim'd:
"He has but return'd to die."

IV.

And, clinging in her fears
More fondly to him now,
She entreated him with tears
To redeem at once his vow,
And bestow on her the right,
As a true and tender wife,

To nurse him, day and night,
For the remnant of his life.

V.

And short the task, alas!
For, ere a month has flown,
A funeral train will pass
Where the bridal flowers are strown;
While the bells from yonder spire
A different tale shall tell,
And their merry peal expire
In the bridegroom's mournful knell.

TO A. W.

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A PURSE WHICH SHE HAD SENT TO THE AUTHOR.

I.

Allow me, Anne, in grateful verse,
To thank thee for thy pretty purse,
With its attendant billet;
Though it may prove of little use
To one like me—for how the deuce
Shall I contrive to fill it?

II.

The poverty of poets is
Proverbial, and a gift like this
Might seem design'd to mock it—
A satire on the man of rhymes,
Who rarely, in the best of times,
Has sixpence in his pocket.

III.

But yet I prize it not the less—
For why should penury depress
  Or affluence elate us?
This purse, though only fill'd with air,
Is welcomer than if it were
  The purse of Fortunatus.

IV.

Thy note, avouching it to be
A token of thy love for me,
  Exceeds in sterling merit
A note convertible to gold,
Which any other purse might hold;
  And therefore I prefer it.

V.

But if my purse be empty, Anne,
My heart, believe me, never can—
  In fact, till death shall still it,
An image which I value more
Than Queen Victoria's stamp'd in ore,
  Thine image, Anne, shall fill it.

ON COMPLETING A TRANSLATION OF YRIARTE'S "FABULAS LITERARIAS."

I.

These Spanish Fables! many a month has pass'd
Since I began the task with joy and pride;
And now, when I have finish'd it at last,
I lay my work despondingly aside.

II.

"A bard, if worthy of the name, should scorn
To turn such foreign trifles into rhyme,"
'Twas thus a candid friend this very morn
Reproved me for my waste of ink and time.

III.

"For though I grant that in the days of Pope,
The art," said he, "was held in high regard,

Translation now is 'damn'd beyond all hope,'
And deem'd too servile for the genuine bard.

IV.

"And yours, of course, however ably made,
Will prove, like other versions, flat and stale,
And find, as such, no favour with *the trade*,
Who estimate a volume by its sale.

V.

"The critics will assail it with abuse,
And mingling raillery with their railing, state
(To use a foreign phrase) that you *traduce*
And *vulgarize* indeed when you translate.*

VI.

"If literal, it will be denounced as tame;
If liberal, it will be pronounced untrue;

---

* On the same book-stall in Florence, I found two translations from the English, *Poemi di Byron volgarizzati*, and *Giacomo Shepherd tradotto dall' Inglese*. The latter version was probably made at second-hand from some French one, the translator of which had taken "Jack" to be synonymous with "Jacques," and traduced it accordingly.

And if it fail, as fail it must, the blame
Will be ascribed exclusively to you.

VII.

"'Twere better that a songster should be mute
Than mock the ear with numbers not his own;
A poet's path to fortune and repute
Is by originality alone.

VIII.

"Then be advised, and drop your present scheme,
Let Yriarte slumber on the shelf,
Exchange the Spanish for an English theme,
And draw your inspiration from yourself."—

IX.

Alas! my friend, you counsel me in vain
To try some more ambitious form of song;
For I have learn'd to love the simple strain
On which my thoughts have been employ'd so long.

X.

I undertook it with a fervent will,
And persevering when I had begun,

Resolved to touch no other task until
The one which I had set myself was done,

XI.

And, faithful as a prisoner on parole,
Though merely held by an ideal bond,
Forebore to cross the Spanish line, and stroll
Into the tempting world that lay beyond.

XII.

Till now—as from his customary toil
The dyer's hand contracts a foreign stain—
My thoughts are racy of the Spanish soil,
My very idiom has a tinge of Spain.

XIII.

And she who once inspired me when I sung,
My native Muse, has grown reserved and shy,
The lyre which was my own is all unstrung,
The Helicon from which I drank is dry.

XIV.

For Yriarte's sake I have restrain'd
Each impulse of the faculty divine,

And Southey, undisturb'd by me, has reign'd
Without a rival in the epic line.

XV.

And thoughts and themes, which might have come to me,
Have lighted on some luckier poet's head,
And Moore and Campbell written, it may be,
Much that I should have written in their stead.

XVI.

But though I have misspent my time, and find
That all my former wit and fancy—all
The freshness and activity of mind
Which once were mine—are lost beyond recall,

XVII.

It matters not; for if I still possess'd
Poetic powers, and, scorning to translate,
Resolved to put my genius to the test,
To be in truth a poet, and create—

XVIII.

My verse, however sweetly it might flow,
Would scarcely for one fleeting hour engage

(As many a better bard has cause to know)
Attention in this unideal age,

XIX.

When song has ceased to charm, and readers fly
Affrighted from the very sound of rhyme,
As daws are routed from a church-tower by
Its sweet bells when they first begin to chime.

XX.

Then wonder not, my friend, if I forbear
To tempt another and a loftier lay;
My task at length is done, and I forswear
All commerce with the Muses from to-day.

XXI.

And yet I close my labours with regret;
For, profitless as the result may be,
And long as it has occupied me, yet
The work has been a pleasant one to me.

XXII.

And, having not the heart, I must confess,
To cast it (as I ought) into the fire,

I venture to commit it to the press,
And tremblingly await the critic's ire.

XXIII.

But if it fail to please the general ear,
Perchance my little book may please a few,
To whom the fable's simple song is dear,
And Yriarte's name entirely new.

1839.

SONNET.

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA.

You bid me write a sonnet, which you call
A trifling matter for a practised bard;—
Why, I might toil for weeks, and, after all,
Might find the fourteen lines a task too hard.
But here are four already, and, in time,
A fifth and sixth may follow in their train;
And if I could but find a seventh rhyme,
'Twould bring me to the middle of my strain.
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—hurrah!
But, while I reckon them, they grow to ten,
Ten lines, with the eleventh on its way;
And now the twelfth is trickling from my pen.
Why, one more couplet, could I hit upon it,
(And here, egad! it comes,) would end my Sonnet.

OH, GIVE ME BACK MY YOUTH.

I.

Oh, give me back my youth! when I believed
That all was bliss and innocence and truth;
Ere woman jilted me, or man deceived,
Oh, give me back my youth!

II.

Ere time had thinn'd and bleach'd my locks of jet,
And utterly demolish'd every tooth—
I owe the dentist for my present set—
Oh, give me back my youth!

III.

When free from gout, and thoughtless of my doom,
I wander'd by the Danube, Rhone or Pruth—

My tour is now on crutches round my room;
Oh, give me back my youth!

IV.

When every maid to whom I pledged my vow,
Rebecca, Sarah, Cecily or Ruth,
Received me kindly, though they scorn me now,
Oh, give me back my youth!

V.

When friends were mine, who are not friendly still,
Or but profess to be, because, forsooth,
They hope to be remember'd in my will—
Oh, give me back my youth!

VI.

When men revered the altar and the throne,
Nor listen'd to Mazzini or Kossuth,
And patriots cared not for themselves alone,
Oh, give me back my youth!

VII.

Ere news was sent by the electric wire
In half an hour from London to Beyrouth,

Ere penny steamers set the Thames on fire,
Oh, give me back my youth !

VIII.

Ere railways kill'd their victims by the score—
For all *Directories* are void of ruth,
Our own as much so as the French of yore,
Oh, give me back my youth !

IX.

But—as the waves refused to turn or stay,
Unmindful of the mandate of Canuth,*
So years roll onwards, and I vainly pray
Oh, give me back my youth !

---

* So spelled in conformity with the Danish pronunciation of the name.

A RURAL SEAT.

A SONNET.

I found, amid my wood-walks, yesterday,
A small sequester'd, flower-embroidered glade,
Enclosed with trees as with a wall of shade,
And vocal with a blackbird's cheerful lay;
When calling to my mind how poets use
At summer eve to stretch themselves for hours
On such a "bed of heap'd Elysian flowers," *
I laid me down to dally with the Muse.
But spiders, ants and woodlice, as I lay,
Came crawling over me, a hateful train;
The blackbird, dropping, ere it flew away,
A parting gift upon me, ceased its strain;
The damp earth chill'd me; and, ah me! to-day
My limbs are aching with rheumatic pain.

* Milton.

AN ORPHAN SCHOOL-GIRL'S LAMENT FOR HER BENEFACTRESS.

I.

Oh! tell me not that she is dead!
Perhaps another letter
To-morrow morning may arrive,
To say that she is better.
It surely is not possible
That death can have bereft me
Of one who seem'd so very well,
When she so lately left me!

II.

But, woe is me! there is no chance
Of better news to-morrow,
For on your face I plainly see
The gloom of hopeless sorrow.

I feel that she is dead indeed,
So long and fondly cherish'd,
And with her all my dearest dreams
Of happiness have perish'd.

III.

Alone, or left in dying
To the tendance of a stranger!
Oh! why was I not with her
In her hour of pain and danger?
She must have pray'd and pined for me;
But I was at a distance,
And never knew that she required
My presence or assistance.

IV.

Had I but been aware of it,
I would have flown with fervour
To the bedside of the sufferer,
To watch by her and serve her;
And He who loveth little ones,
Might haply in His favour,

Have made me, though I'm but a child,
The instrument to save her.

V.

It always did her good, she said,
When ill to have me near her,
A word or smile or kiss of mine
Was all she ask'd to cheer her;
And had I only gone to her,
When first she took the fever,
Her very joy at seeing me
Would soon have made it leave her.

VI.

I was no child of hers, and yet
I loved her as a mother—
My own had died when I was young—
I never knew another;
And now that she has in her turn
So suddenly departed,
I am an orphan once again,
And almost broken-hearted.

VII.

My school-mates all are at their sports—
I hear their merry voices—
In the sunshine and the breeze
Every heart save mine rejoices;
No thought of grief or care have they,
To cloud their genial play-day,
But sad to me will ever be
The memory of this May-day.

VIII.

'Twas but this very morn I thought
With fond anticipation
That, when another month should bring
The mid-summer vacation,
With open arms she'd welcome back
The long-expected comer,
But I shall not return to her
With the returning summer.

IX.

We ne'er shall meet on earth again—
She's gone unto her Maker,

But, if I lead a godly life,
I soon shall overtake her;
My guardian-angel, when I die,
Will bear my spirit thither,
And once more, and for evermore,
I shall be happy with her.

THEY HAD PARTED IN THEIR YOUTH.

I.

They had parted in their youth,
But she trusted in his truth
And the promise he had made that, however he might roam,
He would not forget his vow,
But, if fortune should allow,
Would return and take her back to his Transatlantic home.

II.

Her faith in him was strong,
And she hoped and waited long;
But when months and years had gone, and he neither wrote nor came,

Her health at last gave way,
And she pined from day to day
With a sickness of the heart that consumed her feeble frame.

III.

At length a letter told
That, with a store of gold,
He would presently return, and reclaim his plighted love;
But ere he came, the maid
In her lowly grave was laid,
And her soul had found a home in the better world above.

THE RETURN.

I.

I have come to bear thee back
To my home beyond the sea,
Where the lovely Potomac
Will be lovelier with thee.
Full many a year has pass'd
Since I pledged my youthful vow;
But wealth is mine at last,
And I come to claim thee now.

II.

As I near thy native place,
Every object that I see
Has a dear familiar face
Which I recognize with glee;
From the church that crowns the hill,
To the gray manorial hall,

And the brook that turns the mill,
I knew, and know them all.

III.

And catching, as I pass
On my upland way, the chime
Of insects in the grass,
Or bees among the thyme,
Or the cuckoo's distant lay
Borne faintly o'er the lea,
Oh! it scarcely seems a day
Since I heard the same with thee.

IV.

And the bower in which we met
So oft on summer eves,
When the sunshine, as it set,
Came dancing through the leaves—
And the bench on which I traced
The initials of thy name—
The bench is undefaced,
And the bower is still the same.

V.

Even in thy native cot
Not a sign of change I see;
As I cross the garden plot,
How it breathes of love and thee!
And I lift the latch with pride,
For awaiting me within
Is the long-affianced bride
Whom I come so far to win.

VI.

No! the cot, though standing yet,
Has other inmates now;
In the bower, where once we met,
Other lovers plight their vow.
I had hoped to take thee back
To my home beyond the wave,
By the pleasant Potomac—
But thy home is in the grave.

VII.

So, away, once more away,
To the western world I flee;

For I cannot bear to stay
  Where my hopes are dead with thee ;
Where, from morn to night, the cross
  On the mound where she is laid
Would remind me of the loss
  Of my dear departed maid.

VIII.

But though fleeing for relief
  In another hemisphere
From the presence of a grief
  That would agonize me here,
Shall I e'er forget thee ?—No !
  I may wander where I will,
But till death has laid me low,
  I shall miss and mourn thee still.

A VALENTINE.

How I envy little Fan!
Surely, since the world began,
Happier Spaniel, black or tan,
Never wagg'd its tail, and ran
Round a lady's chamber, than
My four-footed rival Fan;
For its mistress, Mary Ann,
Caring nought for naughty man,
Joe or Jerry, Dick or Dan,
Only loves and fondles Fan.
How I wonder that she can!
How I envy little Fan!

Cave canem, Mary Ann!
Cease to lavish upon Fan
Kisses that, by Nature's plan,
Ought to be reserved for man;
And, as life is but a span,
Quickly from the numerous clan
Of your suitors, Mary Ann,
Choose a husband, while you can.
Might I be the lucky man,
I'd no longer envy Fan.

THE DOMINIE'S COURTSHIP.

I.

He woo'd her in the wisest way
That woman may be woo'd
By any pedagogue who is
In a conjunctive mood;
For in a studied speech, replete
With Academic learning,
He pour'd into her ear the love
With which his heart was yearning.

II.

"Dear Emma," he exclaim'd, "if I
Could win thee for my wife—
A helpmate unto me through all
The *accidence* of life,

My *sum* of happiness would be
Complete with this *addition*,
For even should we *multiply*,
We'd live without *division*.

III.

"Thy beauty is *superlative*,
So matchless in *degree*,
That maids of every *form* and *class*
Must all *give place* to thee.
The finest *figure* of them all,
If scrutinized with rigour,
Would prove a *cipher* at thy side,
And make, in fact, no figure.

IV.

"Thy grace, too, is the general *theme*,
For in thy walk is seen
A *style* of carriage that might be
A *copy* for a queen;
In fact, thy charms are such that, like
The *ruler* of the nation,

Thy presence everywhere is hail'd
With *notes of admiration!*

V.

"I have not much to offer thee
Beyond my heart and hand,
But every *article* I have
Shall be at thy command.
Oh! pity, then, my hapless *case*,
And look with condescension
On one whose passion hath endured
For years without *declension*."

VI.

How could an artless maid resist
A Bachelor of Arts,
Who even in his *parts of speech*
Show'd such uncommon parts?
Their hands were join'd: and ever since
That happy *conjugation*,
The *term* of his domestic life
Has been one *long vacation*.

SONNETS ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

(Written in 1819.)

I.

One day I listen'd to a long harangue
On England's "glorious Freedom of the Press,"
When pondering on the phrase, as if to guess
Its meaning, I bethought me how the gang,
The press-gang prowling in her ports, attack
The famish'd Englishman—how tenderly
They drag him to a tender, and apply
The cat or cutlass to his free-born back.
The "Freedom of the Press!"—detested cant!
A cheat that glosses over every ill!
For so that we submit to woe and want,
And dig their fields and fight their battles still,
Our tyrants—curse their condescension!—grant
That we may write and print whate'er we will.

II.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG AUTHOR.

Write what thou wilt—but be not over-bold
In virtue's cause, nor venture to assail
Vice in high places: for, though sages hold
That truth is great and will at last prevail,
Yet truth's a libel, which, when plainly told,
Consigns an honest author without fail
If not unto the pillory, as of old,
Unto the durance of the common jail.
Write what thou wilt; but when 'tis written, take
A friend's advice, and print it not—unless,
A willing martyr for thy country's sake,
Thou art prepared, like Hunt,* to undergo
The loss of thine own liberty, and so
Exemplify the Freedom of the Press.

---

* In 1813, Leigh Hunt was condemned to two years' imprisonment, for an article published in the *Examiner* newspaper, reprobating the vices and follies of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., in terms which the most inveterate Tory of the present day would allow to have been perfectly justifiable.

LLANGOLLEN ALE.

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE KING'S HEAD HOTEL, LLANGOLLEN.

I.

While younger poets rove and rant
About Llangollen's vale,
I'll sit, and soberly descant
Upon Llangollen Ale.

II.

For though the scene may please at first,
Its charms will quickly stale ;
But he who tastes, must ever thirst
To drink Llangollen Ale.

III.

From rock to rock the *Dee* may roam*
And chafe without avail ;

*The beautiful vale of Llangollen is watered by the river *Dee*. Among other objects of interest, it contains the picturesque ruins

It cannot match its yeasty foam
Against Llangollen Ale.

IV.

The umber-tinted trees that crown
Bron-vawr's ridge are pale,
Contrasted with the nutty brown
That tints Llangollen Ale.

V.

Nor is the keep of *Dinas-bran*,
Though high and hard to scale,
So elevated as the man
Who quaffs Llangollen Ale.

VI.

Thy shattered arch in yonder glen,
Val-crucis, tells a tale

---

of *Val-crucis* Abbey, a house of Cistercians founded in 1206; the *Pillar of Eliseg*, a round stone column supposed to be a sepulchral erection of the sixth century; and the remains of *Castle Dinas-bran*, which nearly cover the summit of *Bron-vawr*, a vast conical hill, steeply sloped on every side.

Of holy men, who now and then
Imbibed Llangollen Ale.

VII.

For when in Lent, for lack of flesh,
Their strength began to fail,
To fortify themselves afresh
They took Llangollen Ale.

VIII.

And *Eliseg*, thy pillar rude
Is merely, I'll be bail,
A monument to him who brew'd
The first Llangollen Ale.

IX.

In short, each ruin, stream or tree,
Within Llangollen's Vale,
Where'er I turn, whate'er I see,
Is redolent of Ale.

SONNET, WRITTEN AT BIRDLIP.*

Upon this rocky platform thus to stand,
And view the vast expanse that lies below—
From where the woods slope down on either hand,
Their brown tops basking in the evening glow—
Across the cultured plain, where broad and bright
The Severn sweeps in many a winding maze—
Until the hills of Cambria bound the sight,
Obscurely glimmering through the distant haze—
To stand on such a spot at even-tide
And gaze in silent ecstacy, while she
Whom I have loved for years, my promised bride,
Her hand in mine, is standing at my side
And gazing on the glorious scene with me,
Oh! this is bliss, if bliss on earth can be!

---

* Birdlip-hill, about six miles from Cheltenham, overlooks the beautiful Vale of Severn. The view from its summit is varied and extensive; and the late Justice Talfourd, in his *Vacation Rambles*, more than once refers to it as scarcely inferior to any of the most celebrated views in Italy and Switzerland.

IN MEMORIAM.

I.

My Lucy, ere thy form is hid
For ever by the coffin-lid,
I'll kneel, and press thy lips with this,
A lover's last and tenderest kiss.

II.

Those lips, that to my kisses once
Return'd as tender a response,
So warm, so eloquent of old,
Those lips, alas! are dumb and cold.

III.

The very hand on which I see
The ring that pledged my faith to thee,

That hand, though fondly press'd, no more
Returns the pressure as of yore;

IV.

And—would that mine had ceased to thrill!—
The beating of thy heart is still,
As still as if it ne'er had known
One fellow-feeling with my own.

V.

My dearest Lucy! can it be
That thou art wholly lost to me?
That even thy unconscious clay
To-morrow will be borne away?

VI.

And that this lock of hair, which now
I sadly sever from thy brow,
Is all that from the greedy grave
Thy lover has the power to save?

VII.

And have we loved so long in vain,
And must we never meet again?

Are all our hopes of wedded bliss
To end in a divorce like this?

VIII.

I little thought when last we met
How soon thy sun of life would set,
And that the flush upon thy cheek
Would fade within a single week.

IX.

Yet even then I felt a strange
Foreboding of some fearful change—
A shadow of the coming doom
That overcast me with its gloom.

X.

And lingering at thy side a day
Beyond my wonted term of stay,
I left thee at the last with tears,
As if our parting were for years.

XI.

And now—no more a plighted bride,
In health and youth and beauty's pride—

A week has barely flown ; and now,
In that brief space, how changed art thou !

XII.

With all the bliss that life could give,
And likely as thou wert to live,
I find thee now from head to feet
Envelop'd in the winding-sheet.

XIII.

And in the fading corse that lies
So white and wan before my eyes,
I almost find it hard to trace,
The well-remember'd form and face.

XIV.

The nosegay which thy hand arranged
In yonder vase is scarcely changed,
Has lost but little of its bloom,
And still with fragrance fills the room.

XV.

Thy chair is in the favourite nook,
Thy mark in the unfinish'd book,

Thy portrait hangs upon the wall,
But thou art gone beyond recall—

XVI.

Art gone unto a better sphere,
While I am left to linger here,
And bear the burthen of a grief
Beyond expression or relief.

XVII.

'Tis said that in the lapse of years
The greatest sorrow disappears;
But no,—the time will never be
When I shall cease to mourn for thee.

XVIII.

In sighs and tears from day to day
I'll wear my lonely life away,
And only beg from Heaven the boon
That death may re-unite us soon—

XIX.

That I, ere many years have pass'd,
May share thy lowly bed at last,

And in the grave, my promised bride,
Be laid to slumber at thy side.

XX.

Until that happy moment, when
I thus shall be thy mate again—
O dearer far than words can tell,
I bid thee now a sad farewell!

TO THE EVENING CLOUDS.

A SONNET.

Ye clouds that, tinted by the westering ray
With yellow and vermillion, seem to lie
As proudly piled along the summer sky
As if your glory never could decay—
In one brief hour will come the close of day,
When all your loveliness of form and dye
Shall cease to captivate the poet's eye
And in the darkening twilight melt away.
Alas! of stuff as baseless and as fair
The dreams that beautified my youth were made!*
The light of love that proved as light as air,
The hope of fame that mock'd me but to fade,
All, all are gone—no more to re-appear—
And life's horizon now is dark and drear.

---

* We are such stuff
As dreams are made on.—*The Tempest.*

EPIGRAMS.

I.

THE LOVE DRAUGHT.—FROM THE GREEK.

As for my favourite fair, I twined
  A wreath one summer day,
Among the roses I perceived
  That Love in ambush lay;
I seized the youngster by his wings,
  And drown'd him in my cup,
And, as he sank amid the wine,
  I gaily drank it up.
But ever since that day, alas!
  I feel no more the same;
For Love is still alive in me,
  And fluttering through my frame.

II.

CRIMINAL AMBITION.—FROM THE SAME.

When Diophon, with other rogues,
Was led to death, and spied
A gallows higher than his own,
He broke his heart and died.

III.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND.—FROM THE ITALIAN.

Classic Querno in the size
Of his works is very wise;
For he prints to sell, and so
Prints them all in folio—
Knowing that the biggest books
Are preferr'd by pastry-cooks.

IV.

TO AN OLD COQUETTE.—FROM THE SPANISH.

Be wise, Corinna, and replace
That pretty tooth-pick in its case;
For Time has pick'd thy teeth too well
To leave thee e'en a single shell,
And all thy pains in quest of crumbs
Will only lacerate thy gums.

V.

A WISH ANTICIPATED.—FROM THE FRENCH.

A butcher, at the point of death, address'd
Unto his weeping wife this last request:
"A man is needful in our trade, and none
Can serve you better than our foreman John.
Lamb-like in heart, and bullock-like in limb,
You'll find a fit and faithful help in him.
So promise me, my love, that, when I'm gone,
You'll think of my advice, and marry John."—
The wife replied, and wiped away a tear,
"Alas! I thought of doing so, my dear."

VI.

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.—FROM THE SAME.

Jack does the utmost that he can
To be esteem'd a ladies' man,
And daily writes, or says he writes, to many;
But still the ladies seem to lack
A *corresponding* taste—for Jack
Is never bless'd with a reply from any.

VII.

COMFORT IN AFFLICTION.—VERSIFIED FROM HORACE WALPOLE.

When Buffon lost his wife, he grieved sincerely,
Until a thought occurr'd to him respecting her—
That, though he felt the lady's loss severely,
He still might have the pleasure of dissecting her.

VIII.

TO A VAIN AND VOLUMINOUS AUTHOR.

You say that all your works have "equal merit,"
And this is true, if rightly understood;
The first you wrote had neither sense nor spirit,
And those you've written since are *just as good.*

IX.

NEW BRIGHTON.*

This morning walking to explore
The wonders of the Cheshire shore,

* Since 1834, when these lines were written, New Brighton, which consisted at the time of only a few scattered houses recently erected among the sand-hills at the mouth of the Mersey, has grown into a large and popular watering-place.

I came to where New Brighton stands,
Half-built, half-buried in the sands;
And pausing for a moment's space
To look upon the dreary place,
I marvell'd how the deuce it came
By such a grand and gracious name,
A name so strangely misapplied—
For surely, to myself I cried,
The scheme of building such a site on,
Though quite a *new*, is not a *bright on'!*

X.

WHAT IS A BOOKWORM?

"What is a Bookworm? Tell me, if you can.
I merely mean the insect, not the man."—
A reptile whom a wit like Hood might dub
A grub that grubs in Grub-street for its grub.

AN HOUR IN BYRON'S CHAIR.

WRITTEN AT THE VILLA OF S. R—E, ESQ., LEGHORN, IN A CHAIR WHICH HAD BEEN THE PROPERTY OF LORD BYRON.

I.

"While you, dear R—e, with your cigar,
Go forth into the evening air,
I'll linger here, and, happier far,
Luxuriate in Byron's chair.

II.

"Though marble fountains sweet to hear,
And marble statues fair to see,
Invite my feet to wander near,
The terrace is no place for me.

III.

"And though the fire-flies, as they rove,
Irradiate the trees around,

To me the garden and the grove
Alike are interdicted ground.

IV.

"For even in this fervid clime
The dews of eve are fraught with ill
To one no longer in his prime,
And barely kept alive by skill.

V.

"And while the young and hale may stray,
With you, beneath the rising moon,
An invalid at close of day
Is safest in the snug saloon.

VI.

"So in this chair, which once belong'd
To Byron—would that it were mine!—
And at this table gaily throng'd
With books and prints and flowers and wine,

VII.

"I'll linger until you return,
And feel the happier, if I may

With 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn'
Contrive to wile an hour away.

VIII.

"For still, methinks, around the chair
In which the poet mused and wrote,
His spirit hovers in the air,
And echoes of his music float.

IX.

"And if, as pious pilgrims tell,
A sense of holiness is felt
By all who worship at the cell
In which some famous saint has dwelt,

X.

"Why, even one on whom the Nine
Had never deign'd to smile before,
Might feel inspired at such a shrine,
And write as Byron wrote of yore."—

XI.

My friend withdrew to take the air,
And left me for the time alone,

As proudly seated in that chair
As any monarch on his throne.

XII.

I sate, and fondly hoped to pour
Some lay that should exalt my name;
I deem'd it Inspiration's hour,
But still no Inspiration came.

XIII.

The odours which the orange-flowers
Exhaled throughout the hot saloon,
Or else the wine, oppress'd my powers,
And steep'd me in a sort of swoon.

XIV.

I felt my energies decline,
O'er all my frame a languor creep,
And ere I had composed a line,
My senses were composed in sleep.

XV.

But though I slept, that easy-chair
Proved an uneasy chair, at best;

A dream, which "had no business there,"
A hateful dream disturb'd my rest.

XVI.

It was not one that aptly glow'd
With memories of the gay and grand,
Which Art and Nature have bestow'd
On Italy's unrivall'd land.

XVII.

Instead of such a dream, or some
Ideal vision of romance,
Which should at such an hour have come
To glorify a poet's trance,

XVIII.

I dream'd that I was journeying still—
Retracing painfully once more
The route which, all alone and ill,
I had so lately journey'd o'er.

XIX.

The daily drive for many a league,
In quest of health, from place to place;

The nightly fever of fatigue,
Resulting from the fruitless chase;

XX.

The scorching sun, the chilling rain,
The doctor's draught, the landlord's bill,
Whate'er had been a plague or pain,
Assail'd me in my slumbers still.

XXI.

But time, which never slumbers, broke
My long and dismal dream at last;
And when the *pendule* gave a stroke,
Proclaiming that an hour had pass'd,

XXII.

The sound aroused me—and at once,
Elate with joy and wide awake,
I left the chair which for the nonce
I rashly had presum'd to take.

XXIII.

No wonder that my fate should be
In such a seat to fare so ill!

For 'tis a seat, which none but he
Who own'd it first could fitly fill.

XXIV.

And every later bard, in fine,
Who plants himself in Byron's chair,
Will find his day-dream end, like mine,
In disappointment and despair.

BY THE SEA-SIDE.

A SONNET.

When last I trod this shore, the ebbing tide
In gentle murmurs scarcely met mine ear,
While o'er the wave, by sunset calm and clear,
I watch'd the white-wing'd bark securely glide.
Now, clouds obscure the sky—the tempest's surge
Drives o'er the shatter'd ship, and, all around
Rude rocks reverberate the sullen sound
Of winds that seem to howl the seaman's dirge.
Alas! poor seaman! I can weep for thee
With sympathy sincere; for, many a day,
Like thee I drifted on a doubtful sea,
And shiver'd in mischance's bitter spray;
And I will pray for thee, that He who gave
His aid to me, may help thee on the wave.

TO MY SON JOHN,

ON HIS SENDING ME, FROM AUSTRALIA, THE PORTRAIT OF MY GRANDCHILD.

I.

I thank thee for the gift, dear John,
Which thou has sent to me—
The portrait of thine infant son,
As like as it can be;
For that the picture must be true,
Is obvious on the slightest view.

II.

I call to mind the time when thou
Wert such another child,
With eyes as bright, as fair a brow,
And lips that sweetly smiled;
And in this miniature I see
The very counterpart of thee.

III.

Nay, even in the little face
Which minds me so of thine,
I almost think that I can trace
Some lineaments of mine;
Some faint resemblance that appears,
Despite the difference of our years.

IV.

My blessing on the bonnie boy!
And may he prove to thee,
Throughout thy life, the source of joy
Which thou wert once to me,
Until the rash resolve to roam
Allured thee from thy native home—

V.

That home so melancholy now,
That home of old so gay,
From which I ne'er had deem'd that thou
So soon wouldst wish to stray.
I heard thy rash resolve with pain,
And long opposed it, but in vain.

VI.

At last we parted—I with fears
That on a foreign soil
Thy lot would be to waste thy years
In penury and toil;
While thou, with youth and hope elate,
Wert eager to confront thy fate.

VII.

To me that parting hour is still
An unabated grief;
For time, which cures so many an ill,
Has brought me no relief,
And day and night I still deplore
The son whom I shall see no more.

VIII.

Yet, though I'm desolate and lone,
'Tis selfish to lament;
Thy letters ever breathe a tone
Of resolute content,
And surely I should not repine,
If happiness and health are thine.

IX.

May fortune still befriend thee, John!
May every sinless joy
That earth can give, be lavished on
Thyself and wife and boy;
And, wheresoe'er our lots are cast,
May Heaven unite us all at last.

ANCIENT BALLADS.—FROM THE SPANISH.

I.

THE YOUNG CID.

The Cid, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, surnamed El Campeador, whose exploits are so prominent in Spanish chronicle and romance, is supposed to have been born in 1206. While he was still a mere stripling, his aged and infirm father Diego Laynez, who had been struck in the royal presence by Don Lozano Gomez, the Count of Gormas, determined to commit the vindication of his honour to one of his three sons, and after subjecting them to a trial, which is detailed in the ballad, selected the youngest, Rodrigo, as the worthiest; and giving him his sword and his blessing, sent him forth on the perilous enterprize of executing vengeance on his haughty and powerful foe.

I.

Diego Laynez sate at home,
A solitary man,
And grimly brooded o'er the blow
Inflicted by Lozan.
That blow! alas, he lack'd the strength
To wipe its stains away,
For he was old, and years will bring
The stoutest to decay.

II.

His eyes were fix'd upon the floor
In melancholy mood,
He could not sleep by night, he took
No pleasure in his food,
He question'd none, he answer'd none,
But turn'd away his face,
As if his very breath would taint
His friends with his disgrace.

III.

For three long days and nights he sate,
Sad, silent and alone,
As if he were some image carved
In monumental stone;
But on the fourth a sudden change
Across his spirit came,
That gave new lustre to his eye,
New vigour to his frame.

IV.

Like one arisen from the dead,
He stood within the hall,

And summon'd to his side his sons,
Three comely youths and tall,
And one by one, as if his hands
Were clench'd in gloves of mail,
He wrung their fingers till he forced
The blood-drop from each nail.

V.

No chiromantic scheme had he;
For witchcraft's hellish skill
Was then unknown in happy Spain—
I would it were so still!
But with such craft as well became
A Christian knight, he press'd
The striplings' hands, that he might put
Their courage to the test.

VI.

The eldest and the second son,
They wept for very pain,
And pitifully pray'd their sire
To loose his iron strain;

And when at length he dropp'd their hands
And let the pair depart,
They slunk away like beaten hounds,
Still whining from the smart.

VII.

And turning to Rodrigo then,
The youngest of the three,
The old man's spirits sank apace,
And little hope had he;
But still resolved to try the test,
Though it had fail'd him twice,
He seized the youngster's hand in his,
And griped it like a vice.

VIII.

"Hold off! unhand me! or, by Heaven,"
Rodrigo cried with ire,
"I shall be tempted to forget
My duty to my sire;
For if I were assaulted thus
By any wight but thee,

I'd tear the caitiff limb from limb,
And quickly set me free."

IX.

"Nay, strike me, curse me, an thou wilt,"
Diego cried with joy,
"My blessing on each curse of thine!
My loved, my gallant boy!
My youngest and my favourite son,
And worthiest of the three,
The honour of thy father's name
Shall be restored in thee."

X.

Then with his blessing and his sword
He bade the stripling go,
And for the wrong which had been done
Avenge him on his foe.
The Cid that day his long career
Of victory began,
And bravely flesh'd his maiden sword
Upon the Count Lozan.

II.

ABDALLAH AND HIS CHRISTIAN BRIDE.

A passage in the 14th vol. of the *España Sagrada* thus gives the story of the following ballad:—

"The said king had two lawful wives, one called Velasquita, whom he repudiated; another he married, named Gelvira, by whom he had two children, Alfonso and Theresa. This Theresa, after her father's death, her brother Alfonso gave in marriage, contrary to her will, and for the sake of peace, to a certain pagan king of Toledo. But she, being a Christian, said to the pagan king, 'Don't come near me, thou pagan king! if thou touch me, the angel of the Lord will kill thee!' But the king laughed, and had his will with her; and immediately, as she had said, he was struck by the angel of the Lord. Perceiving his death approach, he called his chamberlains and counsellors, and ordered them to load his camels with gold and silver, and precious stones and costly raiment, and take her back to Leōn with all these gifts. In which city she put on the monastic habit, and afterwards died at Oviedo, and was buried in the monastery of San Pelayo."

I.

High on his ancestral throne
Sate Alfonso of Leōn;
And his sister, fair and good,
The Infanta, near him stood.

II.

Ill-advised, he gave command
That she should bestow her hand

On the Moor who wore the crown
Of Toledo's ancient town—

III.

Thus affiancing the maid,
To requite Abdallah's aid,
Who had battled by his side
When he quell'd Almanzor's pride.

IV.

The Infanta, standing near,
Heard the king's command with fear,
Being, as a Christian, loth
With a Moor to plight her troth.

V.

Still, although she knelt and pray'd
That the mandate might be stay'd,
Still the king would not relent,
And forego his vile intent;

VI.

But, with words of bitter slight,
Drove the suppliant from his sight,

And, regardless of her grief,
Sent her to Toledo's chief.

VII.

When the Moor approach'd the bed
Of the fair so foully wed,
Her impassion'd feelings broke
From her bosom, and she spoke:—

VIII.

"Hence! the faith of Christ is mine,
And the faith of Islam thine!
Hence! for I will never mate
With a man whose creed I hate.

IX.

"Touch me not! the Lord will aid
Or avenge an injured maid!
Nor permit the cruel wrong
To remain unpunish'd long."

X.

But her tears that fell like rain,
And her struggles were in vain;

For the Moor persisted till
He had wrought his wicked will.

XI.

Ere the morn, with sword of flame,
An avenging angel came,
And the Moor was stricken o'er
With one universal sore.

XII.

Then, o'ercome with terror, he
Set the sad Infanta free,
And despatch'd a chosen band
From the nobles of his land,

XIII.

Charged with gifts of price untold,
Princely gifts of gems and gold,
To escort her to the throne
Of her brother in Leōn.

XIV.

There the dame, enfranchised now,
Took the veil and took the vow,

And, as Christ's devoted bride,
In a convent lived and died.

III.

THE KNIGHT OF BUITRAGO.

Juan the First, of Castille, in 1835, was defeated by the Portuguese, near Aljubarota. Most of the Castilian chivalry, and ten thousand of the infantry, perished in the action, and Juan himself, who was in infirm health, effected his escape with difficulty, through the self-devotion of the Knight of Buitrago, who resigned his own horse to the wounded and dismounted monarch.

I.

"The day is lost!—thy steed is dead,
Oh, mount on mine, and fly!
I'd rather perish in his stead,
Than leave my king to die.
Though faint with wounds and toil and heat,
One final effort try,
And let me help thee to the seat—
I hear their coming cry.

II.

"Now strike the spur, and slack the rein,
And, fleeter than the roe,

My trusty steed will scour the plain,
And bear thee from the foe.
Away, away, my liege! nor stay
To thank thy vassal so—
In serving thee, I merely pay
A service which I owe.

III.

"I bear a lowly name, but yet
No Spanish knight shall say
That to my king I owed a debt
Which I refused to pay;
Nor shall a Spanish widow tell
That from the bloody fray,
In which her honour'd husband fell,
I fled in fear away.

IV.

"I leave a son—and oh, supply
My place, and train aright
His childhood, good my liege!—now fly,
And God protect thy flight!"

So spake the loyal mountaineer,
Buitrago's aged knight,
Then rush'd, and closed his brave career
Amid the thickest fight.

IV.

THE LADYE OF THE TREE.

A passage in the following ballad deserves to be noticed as corroborating an opinion expressed in the *Edinburgh Review*, (vol. 9, p. 393), that though the Spanish Ballads are "free from the libertine air which characterizes our own," yet "enough remains to show that a very accommodating system of morality prevailed—very inconsistent, no doubt, with the ideal of chivalry, but, we believe, exceedingly consonant to its practice." In the passage referred to, the knight is actually counselled by his mother to retain the liberated "Ladye of the Tree" as his mistress.

Aconsejola su madre
Que la tiene por Amiga.

Other instances—equally at variance with the popular notion of knight-errantry—might be readily cited. In the 3rd ballad, for example, of Depping's Collection, a knight who is lamenting the loss of his mistress, is comforted by a companion in arms, who benevolently offers him the fairest of his three sisters to supply the vacancy.

De tres hermanas que tengo
Darte he yo la mas garrida,
Si la quieres por muger,
Si la quieres por amiga.

I.

A knight had followed the chase in vain
Through a long summer day,
For his fleetest hounds had fallen lame,
And his hawk had flown away.

II.

He lean'd his back against an oak,
A weary wight was he,
When he was aware of a damsel fair,
Who sate within the tree.

III.

All naked in the tree she sate,
But her loose and long black hair,
And the shadows of the thick leaves fell
Like a mantle round the fair.

IV.

"O fear me not, Sir Knight," she cried,
"Though a fearful fate is mine—
For I am a maiden of mortal birth,
And sprung from a princely line.

V.

"Seven fairies snatch'd me when a child
From the arms of my aged nurse,
And, woe is me! unto this tree
They bound me with a curse—

VI.

"Within its lonesome shade to dwell
Seven twelvemonths and a day,
Till a stranger knight should break the spell,
And bear me hence away.

VII.

"The seven sad years are ended now,
And when to-morrow's sun
Shall gild the green-wood's topmost bough,
My durance will be done.

VIII.

"But rather than stay till break of day,
Within this dark oak-tree,
I'll be thy wife or leman for life
An thou wilt set me free."

IX.

The knight replied:—"O Ladye, bide
Until the morn, for I
Would fain consult my mother, ere
I give thee a reply."

X.

"Beware, beware!" then quoth the fair,
"For the curse of God will fall
With a deadly blight on the craven knight,
Who leaves a maid in thrall."

XI.

But, nothing moved, he turn'd away
And left her till the morn—
To peak and pine the livelong night,
So lovely and so lorn.

XII.

And straight unto his mother went,
Who counsell'd him to free,
And take for leman to himself
The Ladye of the Tree.

XIII.

At peep of light, return'd the knight
To fetch the maid away;
But presently he spied a sight,
That fill'd him with dismay.

XIV.

For, as he clombe the steepy glade,
Ere he reach'd the dark oak-tree,
He met a gallant cavalcade,
And in the midst was she.

XV.

A youthful knight was at her side,
And clad in rich array,
On a milk-white palfrey, like a bride,
She rode adown the way.

XVI.

The false knight saw the train advance;
He loathed his very life,
For grief that he had miss'd the chance
Of winning such a wife.

XVII.

And falling on his naked sword
With all his force, he ran
The point into his heart, and died
A miserable man.

XVIII.

Heaven grant that every knight, who thus
Refuses to defend
A maiden in her need, may have
A like untimely end.

V.

THE MAIDEN TRIBUTE.

The following ballad is founded on a very questionable incident of Spanish history—the annual tribute of a hundred virgins—which is alleged to have been paid to the Moors by the early princes of the Asturias. The merit of abolishing this odious impost is commonly ascribed by the chroniclers to Alfonso the Chaste, the immediate predecessor of Ramiro.

The battle of Clavijo, referred to at the close of the ballad, is said to have been fought about the year 850, and to have lasted two days. The Moors had the advantage on the first; but on

the morning of the second, Santiago, [the apostle James, the patron saint of Spain,] armed cap-a-pie as a knight, mounted on a white charger, and bearing a white banner inscribed with a bloody cross, headed the Christians to the onset; and the day terminated in the utter rout of the infidels and the slaughter of more than seventy thousand of their number.

I.

Ramiro, monarch of Castile,
Was seated on his throne,
In council with his barons, when,
Unusher'd and alone,
A young and lovely maid advanced,
And stood within the hall,
With modest mien but unabash'd,
In presence of them all.

II.

Her dress was of unsullied white,
Her locks that loosely flew—
Bright golden locks—around her neck
A sunny radiance threw;
Her full eyes flash'd, and out she spake,
Amid the general gaze,

In tones that thrill'd their hearts and fill'd
The crowd with mute amaze.

III.

"Sir king," she cried, "forgive me that
I trespass on thy state,
And dare to lift my voice among
Thy nobles in debate;
A knight may counsel well on points
Of knightly enterprise,
But there are other themes on which
A maid may best advise.

IV.

"Art thou, in sooth, a *Christian* king?
Alas! I know not how
A title, once so truly thine,
Can designate thee now!
For wert thou not a Moor at heart,
Thou surely wouldst disdain
To give in tribute to the Moor
The Christian maids of Spain.

V.

"'Twere better for Castile to be
At once consumed by fire,
Than thus to dally with decay
And sluggishly expire;
'Twere better to forestal thy fate,
Than thus from day to day
Protract it basely by an act
Which drains thy strength away.

VI.

"The hundred maids, that seem to thee
A tax of small account,
Enrich the Moor and make thee poor
To an immense amount;
For every one becomes anon
The mother of a line
Of sons, who, like their sires, will be
The foes of thee and thine.

VII.

"If tribute *must*, alas! be paid,
Oh, send the Moor, in place

Of maids, the woman-hearted knights
Who are Castile's disgrace,
Who shun the foe, and only show
Their manhood when they wed—
By getting daughters, to supply
The misbeliever's bed.

VIII.

"But if the fear of foreign war
Appals thy coward mind,
I warn thee, king, that Spain shall see
A war of bloodier kind—
Her maids at least have manly hearts,
And they shall rise ere long,
And fearfully avenge on thee
This most unmanly wrong."

IX.

The monarch's brow was flush'd with ire
When first the maiden spoke,
But better feelings, ere she paused,
Within his bosom woke;

And straight he swore a solemn oath
By Him who reigns on high,
To take the field against the Moor,
And conquer him or die.

X.

Right glad Ramiro's subjects were—
From cottage and from hall
Both serf and lord with one accord
Obey'd his warlike call;
He met the Moor, and vanquish'd him
By Santiago's aid,
And never from that moment more
The Maiden Tribute paid.

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE EVENING OF MY WIFE'S FUNERAL.

December 26th, 1860.

I.

I am dying, I am dying, in my solitary room,
While the lilac and laburnum are bursting into bloom;
The vernal breeze and sunshine, that restore the drooping tree
To its pristine health and vigour, bring no healing unto me.

II.

I am dying, I am dying—there is canker at the core,
And the balmy air around me can reanimate no more;
Ere the lilac and laburnum begin to shed their bloom,
And the spring gives place to summer, I shall sink into the tomb.

Such were the sad lines that, with faltering breath,
In April I dictated to my wife,
When I, methought, was on the verge of death,
And she in all the flush of health and life.

Eight months have slowly pass'd—and, woe is me!
I still live feebly on from day to day;
But she, whose love so long sustain'd me, she
Has unexpectedly been snatch'd away.
Alas! what grief is mine! how much I miss
Her patient watchings by my bed of pain—
The whisper'd word of hope, the tender kiss,
With which she sought to cheer, nor sought in vain!
Oh! death, kind death, come quickly to my aid,
And lay me in the grave where she is laid.

SONNET.

ON REVISITING THE OLD PRIORY CHAPEL, WOOLTON,
January 7th, 1862.

Just forty years ago, a youthful pair,
We knelt in bliss before Saint Bennet's shrine,
As on her plighted hand, so soft and fair,
I placed the ring of gold which made her mine.
A widow'd wanderer now, and old and grey,
Again I kneel before the shrine, on this
The anniversary of our wedding-day,
And mourn her death and my departed bliss.
But though her body hath return'd to dust,
Her soul still liveth in the realms above,
And in a little while, I humbly trust
That He, who is the fount of life and love,
Will join us as He join'd us heretofore,
And death have power to sunder us no more.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A TOMB-STONE.

Mourn not for her, the best of wives,
Whose dear remains are laid below,
But on the husband who survives,
Reader, one pitying thought bestow,
And unto heaven a prayer prefer
That he may soon repose with her.

THE END.

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